JUSTICE, PEACE AND THE INTEGRITY OF CREATION

Insights from Orthodoxy

Edited by Gennadios Limouris

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World Council of Churches
150, route de Ferney
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WCC Publications, Geneva

Cover design: Rob Lucas

ISBN 2-8254-0979-0

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150 route de Ferney, 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland

Printed in Switzerland

Contents

Introduction *Gennadios Limouris* vii

Orthodox Perspectives on Creation 1

Orthodox Perspectives on Justice and Peace 16

Christian Witness to Peace and Justice *Vitaly Borovoy* 28

Justice and Peace in the Orthodox Tradition *George Dragas* . . . 40

Towards a Eucharistic Ecology *K.M. George* 45

An Ethical Approach to Justice and Peace *Vassilios Giultsis* . . . 56

The Integrity of Creation: Ethical Issues *Stanley S. Harakas* . . . 70

Creation from the Viewpoint of Dogmatic Theology
Platon Igumnov 83

Aspects of the Biblical Theology of Creation *Vasile Mihoc* 94

God's Creation and Human Responsibility *Theodor Nikolaou* . . 100

Peace and Justice: Theological Foundations *Vlassios Phidas* . . . 111

Biblical Understanding of Justice and Peace *Paul Tarazi* 116

List of Contributors 125

Introduction

The Eastern Orthodox and the Oriental Orthodox member churches of the World Council of Churches had an opportunity to reflect on the issue of "Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation" at two consultations, one in Sofia, Bulgaria (1987) and the other at Minsk, USSR (1989). Over forty participants — theologians, clergy, men and women — took part in both meetings, working together in a spirit of worship and fellowship. The meetings were held under the auspices of the Bulgarian and Russian Orthodox churches. The new spirit of perestroika-glasnost was evident in these societies, and our own discussions were marked by real openness and sharing. We are deeply grateful to the churches which hosted the meetings, both for the physical facilities provided and the sustained interest they took in the theme of our deliberations.

Brought together in this book are the statements and some of the major presentations made at the two consultations. We regret that all the papers presented at the meetings are not included here. We had to select, for reasons of space and to avoid repetition and overlapping as much as possible, which also explains why some of the articles had to be shortened.

My purpose in this introduction is to provide a brief interpretative summary of the reflections that took place.

We analyzed the contemporary situation. The Christian faith today has become for most people a private and subjective belief; it has ceased to open humankind to the infinite experience of "life in Christ", and to the "acquisition of the Holy Spirit". The inner life has ceased to be the "art of arts and science of sciences". The love of discovery has been moved from the inner life towards the domination of the fallen world, that is, towards science and its technical applications.

Science and technology have been made possible by the biblical revelation which desacralizes nature. But the desacralization of the world

ought only to be a stage on the way towards its transformation and transfiguration. Instead, fallen nature, subject to necessity and death by the sin of humankind, is simply identified with God's creation. Churches have been busy trying to turn the mystery of faith into a science in opposition to science. They have tried to put limits to research, turning God, in Bonhoeffer's words, into a "God of the gaps" in human knowledge, forgetting the "spiritual body" *(soma pneumatikon)* and the spiritual potentiality of matter.

In a universe desacralized by Christianity but abandoned to its fall by many Christians, we have seen, on the one hand, science and technology developing with no goal beyond themselves, and on the other the emergence of pantheisms and mystical atheisms, captivated by the mystery of the cosmos but opposed to the idea of a personal God. It is in this context that Christians, with their experience of God's love and will in Jesus Christ, an experience that is both personal and ontological, must restore the traffic between heaven and earth by their constant prayer: "Thine own of thine own we offer to thee, in all and for all."

We tried to appreciate the various approaches to the problem. The biblical view of reality — time and space, cosmos, nature-humanity-history, all and always in relation to God — witnesses to the fascinating plan and work of God from creation (Gen 1:1-2, 4a) leading to new creation (Rev. 21). Already in the prophetic tradition of the scriptures of Israel it is seen that creation and new creation belong together, as does the work of God in nature and history.

> Thus says God, JHWH, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread forth the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it: I am JHWH, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you: I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. I am JHWH, that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to graven images. Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them (Isa. 42:5-9).

This promise that Christians find fulfilled in the new creation in Christ and in the Spirit prompts us to praise the Father for the integrity of creation, even amidst all the disintegration which is experienced (cf. 2 Cor. 3:17,18; 5:17; Gal. 4:4-7; 5:5; Titus 3:5). Christians must keep in mind that vision — the main key to the scriptures both of Israel and the church — in spite of all evil and suffering, brokenness and contingency,

diseases, calamities and death; in spite even of all those sins which are perpetrated through humanity's irresponsiblity with regard to the ecosystem; through all the lack of community amongst women and men, peoples, races and cultures, through all the ambiguities of genetic engineering and similar manipulations of life, through all the indifference to poverty and suffering and to the violation of human rights. As Christianity has been widely accused of being largely responsible for the wanton exploitation of the earth, Christians are challenged today to look afresh for a common vision of creation and re-creation, rooted in the apostolic faith and in the Tradition and ecclesial life of the church — a version that will affirm God as the source and sole measure of time and space and the sole author of life and hope, to whom we are accountable for our stewardship (cf. Matt. 25:14-30; Acts 17:24-31; 2 Pet.3:5-12).

We understood the term "integrity" in its dynamic rather than in its static connotation. The world is stamped with integrity, which entails unity, goodness and freedom, so that it may reflect and participate in God's glory. Jesus Christ makes it possible for human beings to be the new creation, to become what they are supposed to be — the image and likeness of God — and to live in fellowship and communion with God. Not only human beings but creation itself was promised freedom from bondage to decay and to obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God (cf. Rom. 8:21). The entire universe — all things visible and invisible — should be seen in the light of the resurrection. Therefore, Christians live by the hope that God in Jesus Christ sustains and preserves creation *(ktisis)* and its integrity and that, in spite of suffering and calamities, nothing can separate us from God's love. They confess that creation is from God, in God, and turns towards God. Humanity participates in that creation and so dares not profane or trivialize it into merely exploitable "things" or "matter". For Christians, the world is not autonomous, bound to its own rules, but accountable to the Creator's righteous judgment and open to his compassionate and merciful action.

Thus, in spite of all ambiguity, we do experience the essential qualities of the creation, its unity, integrity, goodness and freedom, as the gifts of God the Creator, Sustainer and Sanctifier. And our commitment to creation is rooted and based in our faith in Jesus Christ who is the Lord of this *ktisis* and in his life and mission. In Jesus alone can we understand fully the meaning of God's creation, and by his resurrection we learn its final purpose. And any solidarity with the world on our part must be based on a very broad ecclesiological foundation of what is represented by the creative work of the Holy Spirit who has never ceased to operate by

his "energies" for the renewal and development of all humanity, and who, from the time of Pentecost and by virtue of the incarnation, the cross and the resurrection, operates prophetically on behalf of God in a way that is decisive for human history through the historical community created by God.

There can be little doubt that the human creature is at the centre of our present crisis. Of all creatures, *ktismata*, only the human beings play a problematic role. Endowed with intelligence, memory and freedom, they are uniquely fitted to participate intentionally in creation's fulfilment in accordance with the Creator's intent. Thus Psalm 104 celebrates the Creator's provision of sustenance for all creatures. Through work human beings participate in the care (*frontis*) of creation. They are called to be "co-creators", co-workers with the Creator. They are called to participate in the building of communities of love and justice, drawing carefully upon the abundance of the earth and sharing it equitably.

Leontius of Nepolis (7th century) describes this tellingly: "The creation does not venerate the Creator through itself directly, but it is through me that the heavens declare the glory of God, through me the moon offers him homage, through me stars ascribe glory to him, through me the waters, rain and dew, with the whole of the creation, worship and glorify him."

It is this understanding that lies behind the affirmation, found in several of the papers presented at our meetings, of the centrality of the human person in God's scheme of things. The human being is both king and priest; he/she has been given by God the responsibility to rule, but that responsibility goes with the priestly role of prayer and mediation. This biblical perspective alone will enable us to theologically appreciate the idea of stewardship and translate it into responsible practice.

We acknowledged that Christ is the source of our peace. Christ proclaims the "gospel of peace" (Eph. 6:15). "He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near" (Eph.2:12). He became "our peace" (Eph. 2:14). "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you..." (Jn 14:27), he told his disciples.

We also acknowledged that Christ is the source of all authentic freedom, that in Christ and the church we find the image and meaning of true freedom, which is liberation from the "law of sin and death" working in our earthly members: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2). Only in Christ and the church do we find the pattern for the right relationships among human beings to each other, to themselves, to their bodies, to their

sexuality, to their psychic and emotional experiences, to their earthly institutions and histories, to their death... and to God himself. This "right relationship" is true liberty. When a person finds it and lives it, he or she is free indeed. Without it there is only enslavement to "empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe" (Col. 2:8) and bondage to the graceless powers of "this age" whose "form is passing away" (1 Cor. 7:31).

Thus, true freedom is in Christ and in the church as God's kingdom on earth. Our witness and service in the world is to let people see this and know this, and so to be freed from the futility of their delusions and rebellions, as well as from the frustrations and disappointments which inevitably result when their earthly needs and desires, even when satisfied, still prove insufficient and unfulfilling.

God's commandment to love one's neighbour, even one's enemy, means that Christians are always called to love justice and live in peace with all people. It is therefore inconsistent with a life in Christ for them actively to support or tacitly to tolerate a known injustice.

There is a strong tradition of looking at spiritual struggle in terms of warfare. The cross of Jesus Christ for St Paul is the locus of God's decisive victory in the struggle against evil forces (cf. Col. 2:15); and the resurrection of Christ is the "first-fruit" of that victory in the world. The warfare continues until all powers are brought under the feet of Christ and God shall be all and in all (cf. 1 Cor. 15:20-28). Meanwhile, Christians have to put on the whole armour of God to fight against evil forces and the spiritual hosts of darkness still operating in the world (cf. Eph. 6:17).

Today the passion of the mystical Christ, embodied in the lives of those Christians who have sacrificed themselves for the cause of justice, follows the same pattern as the passion of the historical Jesus. Like Jesus, many people today are persecuted, killed or imprisoned because they defend the rights of the lowly and the just claims of the poor. They suffer this fate because of their faith in God and love of their neighbour.

The resurrection of the crucified Jesus proves that the sacrifice of one's life, out of love for the down-trodden and abused, is not meaningless. It means sharing in the fullness of life and the definitive triumph of justice. The crucified One is the Living One. Those who are crucified in his cause will also live.

The agonizing question which Christians around the world and particularly the Orthodox have to face — and which many of them are courageously facing though others seem to ignore it — is this: What is more important, the ultimate triumph of conforming to one's society as it

is or the creation of a new koinonia in which bitter memories are erased and new ways of relating to the other members of the body of Christ are realized?

Christians have inherited a tradition of martyrdom, of being willing to suffer and die for their faith and their homeland. They find it more difficult to *live* for it. They do of course recognize that love (agape) is more important than anything else. But love is too often expressed in strange ways. At the time of the Inquisition, love for the soul of a heretic was expressed by burning his body; sometimes today, similarly, love may be expressed through explicit or implicit proselytism. It is much more difficult to establish new patterns of koinonia, to move forward together in the spirit of fellowship and Christian love.

We live in a world that, once again, has made a covenant with death. But we live here as witnesses to a God who has made a covenant with life. The new covenant in the blood of Jesus is God's ratification and renewal of the ancient creational *Amen* to life; it is the final seal on the divine determination to mend the creation. Christians who have discerned the signs of our times know that their gospel, therefore, stands in direct confrontation with the dominating spirit of our age, that spirit emanating from the bargaining with death. The mask of life, which death-serving empires heretofore have sometimes worn with deceptive grace, has in our time been pulled off.

The unity of humanity, shattered by human pride and the lust to possess the creation, and therefore by death — the state of death which results from this separation — is restored by and in Christ. Christ is separated from nothing and no one. Through the eucharist we enter into this immense unity; we are all members of one another, responsible for each other, each of us bearing the whole of humanity with us. The eucharistic bread does more than establish a bond between the risen Christ and each one of us, more than bring the visible unity of the church into being. It also introduces us to the real unity of all humanity. Shared, it makes us sharers.

People in this century have witnessed a strong wave of liberation movements; this has created a number of independent states and many of them have thrown off the centuries-old yoke of foreign domination. This process continues today; however, we still feel that human evil stands in the way of this inevitable historical process. Sometimes industrial states try to impose on developing countries their own strategies of development which would ensure the perpetuation of underdevelopment. Racial discrimination, apartheid, and other forms of human humiliation and indignity are the lot of millions of people.

Daily we live in contact with "other" people in this world, and this is often considered to be "dangerous". Dangerous it certainly is, if our own knowledge and vision of Orthodoxy in the world is weak. But it is also a unique opportunity, without precedent, to know and understand the *Western* Christian world (if there still is one) and the rest of the world. We are seeing today a new openness towards the world, which must be realized on the basis of values and truths of human life and in common actions and decisions. It is true that such "openness" in many cases lacks the conviction that the knowledge of the full truth, given in Christ and accessible only to the community of the church in Christ, is only realized through him and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Salvation has two dimensions for the Christian, the transcendant and the immanent. Without peace with God, there can be no true peace with humanity. There can be no new humanity until there are new persons. Thus the vertical dimension of Christianity should be described in terms of faith and prayer, church and sacraments, death and eternal life — as we have always done. At the same time, however, we cannot forget the horizontal dimension. We should join people in their struggles for transformation of life and their search for justice, peace, disarmament and the health of the environment.

The major task of Christians, therefore, should go beyond general talk about justice and peace; it should involve a conscious commitment to peace, justice and the integrity of creation. The papers presented here provide a theological rationale for such commitment.

We are grateful to all our friends and colleagues who made this publication possible, in particular to Mr Maurice Chapman who helped with editing and translation.

GENNADIOS LIMOURIS

Orthodox Perspectives on Creation

A group of Orthodox theologians representing twelve Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox member churches of the World Council of Churches throughout the world met in Sofia, Bulgaria, from 24 October to 2 November 1987. The consultation was sponsored by the Programme on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation of the World Council of Churches and enjoyed under the gracious hospitality of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. At the end of the consultation a report on "Orthodox Perspectives on Creation" was made available with a special request that it be taken into consideration for the preparation of the WCC Conference on the Integrity of Creation to be held in Oslo (Norway), 24 February – 4 March 1988. The report is specially commended to the Orthodox member churches of the WCC for study, prayer and action.

I. The creation

Creation and Holy Trinity

1. We believe that the created world itself is a "mystery" originating in the sovereign will of God accomplished by the action *(energeia)* of the Holy Trinity. We confess in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed (325/381) that the Father is the "Creator of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible", the Son "He through whom all things were made", and the Holy Spirit, the "Creator of life" *(zoopoion)*. Thus, the three persons created together the world, which is the fruit of the common action of the Holy Trinity issuing out of the one essence.

2. As St. Basil the Great said, "We should understand in the creation the original cause of the Father as a founding cause, the cause of the Son as a creative one, and the cause of the Spirit as an implementing one" (St. Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto,* P.G. 32, 136 B). Thus, the Father is the

"Creator of all things" (*Ta panta*: 1 Cor. 8:6; Rom. 11:36), the Son is the one "through whom all things were made" (John 1:3; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2), and the Holy Spirit is the one "in whom are all things" (*en o ta panta* Gen. 1:2). Everything that he (God the Creator) had made ... was very good" (Gen. 1:31), because "first He conceived, and His conception was a work carried out by His Word, and perfected by His Spirit" (St. Gregory the Theologian, *Homily* 38, 9, P.G. 36, 320; cf. also St. John of Damascus, *De Fide Orth.* 11, 2, P.G. 94, 865).

3. Thus, the action of the Holy Trinity, rooted in the Father, is presented as the 'economy' of the Son and the Spirit: the former bringing God's desire into existence and the latter perfecting it in goodness and beauty; the one calling the creation and leading it to the Father, and the other helping the creation to respond to His call and communicating perfection to it. Thus, the creation is the result of the communion (koinonia), close relationship and cooperation of the Holy Trinity. The community of three Persons participates actively in the execution of the whole of God's plan.

Creation "out of nothing"

4. "In the beginning" the Holy Trinity created the world (heaven and earth) "out of nothing" *(ex nihilo)* and not out of pre-existent matter. The world is a production of God's free will, goodness, wisdom, love and omnipotence. God did not create the world in order to satisfy some need of His. Rather he created it without compulsion and without force in order that it might enjoy His blessings and share in His goodness. God then brought all things into being out of nothing, creating both the visible *(oratôs)* and the invisible *(aôratos)*.

5. "Out of nothing" (ex nihilo) finds its first expression in the Bible (cf. Gen. 1; John 1:3; Isa. 42:5, Ps.33:6). "Beholding the heavens and the earth, and seeing all that is there, you will understand that God has created it all from nothing" (2 Macc. 7:28). Thus, the creation springs into being or passes into being out of non-being. As St. Gregory of Nyssa affirms, "It begins to be, and the very substance of the creation owes its beginning to change" (St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Homily* 29, P.G. 31, 89-91). This transition from non-existence to existence is a change brought about by God's creative Word "who has established the world so that it shall not be moved" (Ps. 93:1).

Creation of the cosmos – integrity of the world

6. God is the Creator of the world. The world as cosmos, i.e. a created order with its own integrity, is a positive reality. It is the good work of the

good God (Gen. 1), made by God for the blessed existence of humanity. The Cappadocian Fathers teach that God first creates the world and beautifies it like a palace, and then leads humanity into it. The genesis of the cosmos, being in becoming, is a mystery *(mysterion)* for the human mind, a genesis produced by the Word of God. As such, the world is a revelation of God (Rom. 1:19-20). Thus, when its intelligent inhabitants see it as cosmos, they come to learn about the Divine wisdom and the Divine energies. The cosmos is a coherent whole, a created synthesis, because all its elements are united and interrelated in time and space. A serious study of the mystery of creation, through faith, prayer, meditation and science, will make a positive contribution to the recognition of the integrity of the creation. The daily office of the Church (vespers) begins with a psalm which exalts the beauty of this mystery (Ps. 104, LXX 103), while the Fathers of the Church often comment on the various biblical passages which describe the integrity of the creation.

Value of the creation

7. The value of the creation is seen not only in the fact that it is intrinsically good, but also in the fact that it is appointed by God to be the home for living beings. The value of the natural creation is revealed in the fact that it was made for God (something which is beautifully expressed in Orthodox iconography), i.e. to be the context for God's Incarnation and humankind's deification, and as such, the beginning of the actualization of the Kingdom of God. We may say that the cosmos provides the stage upon which humankind moves from creation to deification. Ultimately, however, the whole of the creation is destined to become a transfigured world, since the salvation of humankind necessarily involves the salvation of its natural home, the cosmos.

Human being as a microcosm

8. The fact that Adam and Eve were created by God last of all the other created beings and in a different way – not just by the utterance of a Divine Word but by the direct involvement and action of God – indicates not only the outstanding position of the human race in the whole of the creation, but also its special relation to God. According to the Church Fathers, Genesis 1:26 ff "... Let us make man ..." *(poiesomen anthropon)* shows that the creation of the human being was the result of a Trinitarian act. Particularly significant in this connection is the statement that "man was made according to the image and the likeness of God". The reference to "the image of God" is to be understood in terms of Jesus Christ, since

he is explicitly identified with it (2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3ff). Thus for mankind to be in the image of God means to be in, or assimilated to, Christ. This is a matter of grace and act and not a matter of nature, because only Christ is by nature God's image as God's eternal and natural offspring, his only begotten Son. The "likeness of God" is often connected with the grace of the Spirit who assimilates us to Christ.

9. In the created world only the human being combines material and spiritual elements. Human existence is thus differentiated from non-human creation in a qualitative way. In light of this fact, the Church Fathers often speak of the human being as a "little world", a "microcosm" of the whole of the creation. Using this notion, the Church Fathers teach that the human body contains in it all levels of existence of the natural world which preceded it in the order of the creation, and considered the physical elements which make up the human body as in no way different from those which constitute the physical world. This means that the natural world is fully integrated with the human being and the whole of the creation.

10. At the same time, the Fathers' use of the notion of microcosm means that humanity, created in God's image and likeness, transcends the material world because it participates in God spiritually and consciously, unlike the rest of the creation. Humankind then stands on the boundary *(methorion)* between the material and the spiritual worlds as a connecting link. It is directly related to the earthly aspect of created existence as well as to the uncreated existence of the Creator. As such, on the one hand, it directly influences our thinking about the integrity of creation, and on the other hand it gives to human nature a dynamic spiritual dimension.

11. St. Gregory the Theologian (*Homily* 45,8) says that we are fully involved with the material creation by virtue of our physical existence, and that the material created reality is deeply involved with us. If we move to the direction of deification, our human nature, progressing towards God, will somehow carry the created material world with it. If, however, we move to the opposite direction, the created material world will suffer with us as well (cf. Rom. 8:19-22). This means that we are called to exercize dominion over all creatures on earth (cf. Gen. 1:28), i.e. to be stewards *(oikonomoi)* of God's material world, caring for it, maintaining it in its integrity and perfecting it by opening it up to God through our own deification.

The Incarnation as the renewal of the creation

12. God's will, wisdom and love for the creation in general and for humankind in particular are revealed in the Incarnation in an inexpressible

way. The Son of God, as the one through whom the process of creation was fulfilled, came down from heaven into the world and became fully man, i.e. assumed human nature in its integrity and led it to the fulfilment of its God-given destiny, deification. The Orthodox Church teaches that the Virgin Mother of God, the Theotokos, is the model of the renewal of humankind and the creation in Christ. In her receiving of the Son of God, the whole humankind and the whole of the creation participate. In the Incarnate God the Father "made known ... his will ... as a plan for the fulness of time, to unite all things in him (Christ), things in heaven and things on earth" (Eph. 1:10). In other words, Jesus Christ, the Son of God became man, restored and renewed humanity and the whole of the creation, uniting both of them with the Creator in and through Himself. One of the Trinity, thus, became Incarnate, became man, revealing his Lordship over the whole of the creation, and showing humanity a Lordship in stewardship and service.

II. Disintegrated creation

The human fall and the disintegration of the creation

13. Before their fall the first human beings experienced the creation as one harmonious whole. It was like a beautiful garden (*paradeisos*, Gen. 2:8) which they tended with care and love. The human fall, however, which was essentially a sinful exercising of human freedom, introduced forces of disintegration into the body of creation. Humanity experienced a two-fold alienation. On the one hand, it was estranged from the Creator, since Adam and Eve tended to hide themselves away from the sight of God (cf. Gen. 3:8) as their communion with the source of life and light was broken. On the other hand, humanity lost its capacity to enter into a proper relation with nature and with the body of the creation. Enmity between the natural world and human beings replaced the relationship of harmony and care. Domination and exploitation of the creation for selfish ends by greedy human beings became the order of history. Thus, manifold forms of disintegration set in which converged in the fact of death and corruption. Fear of death instilled anxiety, acquisitiveness, greed, hatred and despair in human beings. Modern forms of economic exploitation, racial oppression, social inequalities, war, genocide, etc. are all consequences of the fear of death and collective signs of death.

14. Creation was given to humanity as a gift that they may share it in a eucharistic sense, so that the sustenance and fulfilment of life might be

achieved. The divine plan assumes that there is a material give-and-take relationship between human beings and the natural world.

15. Sin obscured the glorious image of God in the human person, but it did not efface it completely, as St. Athanasius and the whole of the patristic tradition affirmed. St. Gregory the Theologian teaches that through the fall humanity lost only its condition of wellbeing, but not its possibility of being. Through the Incarnation of the Word of God the door of salvation was opened to humanity, through which human beings can enter again into a relation with their Creator which restores them in the divine image and enables them both to secure the being and to regain the lost condition of their well-being. It is in this context of the salvation which is offered by God in Christ not only for human beings but also for the whole of the creation that human beings have a special responsibility to exercize their freedom in a way which serves God's gracious activity for the reintegration and transfiguration of all reality.

Human sin and forms of injustice

16. Several issues, which bear the stamp of human sin, should be identified and underlined because they exemplify some of the glaring forms of injustice and disintegration which we experience today (cf. Habakkuk 1:3; James 5:4). They should be given serious and immediate attention by the Church and all people of goodwill. They call for the urgent exercise of Christian responsibility towards the creation and for the practical manifestation of the Christian concern for the human person and the human community; recognizing their shortcomings in the past in this respect, Christians have now also to show their solidarity with all people of goodwill in fostering the forces of justice for manifestation of the kingdom of God in humankind and in the whole Creation.

Poverty and economic injustice

17. The poverty of millions of people in some parts of the world and the accumulation of unmerited wealth in some other parts reveal the demonic face of injustice created by human beings in God's creation. It has become clear today that political, economic and technological forces, operating at transnational levels, can arbitrarily inflict poverty and socio-economic crises wherever they want, as well as inordinate and unjust affluence. Two thirds of humanity suffer from the loss of the dignity, which is one the chief marks of the divine image in the human person. Consumerism, profligate styles of life, exaltations of money and material values, catering to illegitimate pleasures of the senses, greedy competition for material success, etc.

are other prominent elements of the syndrome of injustice which results in the increasing impoverishment of our world.

The environmental crisis

18. Environmental issues like air and water pollution, depletion of non-renewable resources, destruction of the ozone layer, increasing nuclear radiation, deforestation and desertification of vast areas, etc. threaten the life itself on this planet. The gifts of science and technology are being misused by human beings to the extent of abusing nature and turning today's life on earth into a hell, not only for the many millions of existing people but also for the generations to come. The voice of those who call for a just development, equal distribution of resources and ecological life-styles is being systematically suppressed. Advances in bio-technology and genetic enginering need to be seen in the light of the Holy Spirit because without adequate knowledge of the transcendent (divine) vocation and spiritual nature of humanity, these new techniques run the risk of initiating biological disruption leading to disastrous mutations that are extremely dangerous for the true life on earth. While human creativity and freedom can be affirmed as supreme gifts of God, it should also be emphasized that they should be rooted in divine wisdom and in human spiritual maturity.

Racism and discrimination

19. It is a great insult to the God-given dignity of human beings that various forms of discrimination on the basis of race, colour, creed and culture are practised in our world today. Very often an alliance between dominant economic forces and powerful political forces supports and helps to maintain racial, political, cultural and religious discrimination. The cry of millions of people who are oppressed because of their race or their cultural identity is a serious concern of all Christians and of all other people of goodwill. Racial discrimination with all its violent and inhuman manifestations is one of the tragic consequences of colonial and imperialist domination. Christian faith affirms that diversity of race and culture reflects the beauty of God's creation. To deny the inherent right of people to affirm their identity with self-respect, dignity and openness to others is a sin against God's creation.

Injustice to women

20. Injustice to women all over the world is another sign of the human fall and the disintegration of the creation. In many parts of the world,

women's dignity as human beings is trampled upon through sexism, inequality in wages and discrimination. The conditions of life in many parts of the world are such that women are subject to physical and mental harassment, insults and insecurity. There is a genuine issue of injustice towards women and the churches need to be seriously concerned with this.

21. Orthodox Church calendars have a long list of women martyrs and saints. Orthodox women participate responsibly in the teaching of the Christian faith, diakonia, church choirs and other vital activities in the life of the Church.

22. But one has to admit that, due to certain socio-historical factors, women have not always been provided with opportunities for active participation in the church's life at parish and diocesan levels.

The arms race

23. Production and sale of arms and the accumulation of nuclear weapons by nations constitute a grave affront to human dignity and to the cause of justice in the creation (cf. Isa. 2:4; Ezek. 39:10). Much of the misery and suffering of many human beings today can be traced to the demonic world of arms race and arms production. Nations plunder the bread-bowls of humanity to create weapons of death in the name of national security or defence against enemies. So many of the human resources are today dedicated to the arms race that all other efforts for the improvement and betterment of the human condition suffer from lack of adequate resources. Not only is butter traded away for guns, but also much-needed social reforms, or constructive economic development programmes, or the commitment of funds for medical research, for the healing of all kinds of illnesses, for increased educational opportunities, and for a host of humanity-benefiting projects are set aside. The arms race forces humanity to trade away its birthright for a full and god-like existence in exchange for a militaristic bowl of pottage (Gen. 25:27-34). This is the distinctive sin of the 20th century, for not only do this attitude and pursuit destroy many potentialities and opportunities for human growth and development, but they threaten humanity itself with the ultimate sin of nuclear destruction.

III. The transfigured creation

Jesus Christ Saviour and Redeemer

24. The terrible consequences of sin in all of its manifestations in humanity, in society and in the environment make it imperative for all

human beings to search for ways and means to do away with the evil which has accumulated in the world at the present time.

25. Christians confess that, "left to itself", humanity is unable to rid itself of the power of sin and its consequences of corruption and death. Humanity is incapable of saving itself (Rom. 3:10-20). Salvation can only come from Almighty God, the Holy Trinity. Sin was perpetrated by humanity through its exercising of free will. On the other hand, the redemption from sin is a perfect act of God's will "who is love" (1 John 4:8). Thus, salvation is a divine answer to the evil which "exists" parasitically in the whole of the creation. The essence of salvation is expressed in the sacrifice of the God-man, our Lord Jesus Christ, on the Cross and His victory over death, sin and evil, through His Resurrection: "... so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we (human beings) too may walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4).

26. Thanks to Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, every human being and the whole of the creation receive the gift of victory over sin, evil and corruption (Col. 1:14-17). Death did not triumph on Calvary. Christ is risen. Christ's resurrection is a solid and fundamental hope for every believing human being in the struggle against evil in all of its manifestations. It is already a guarantee of the ultimate triumph of life and therefore a hope for the salvation of every person and of the entire creation.

27. The New Testament reveals the eschatological reality of the new, renewed and perfected world – the New Jerusalem (cf. Gal. 4:26; Rev. 21:10). In the Eucharist one is given to live and experience the world which is in unity with God, and to enter into communion with the eschatological world (John 6:26ff.). This new reality, granted by the Holy Spirit, is present in the Church, its sacraments, diakonia, witness and thought. Having thus received spiritual vigour and hope as with Christ through this vision, Christians see their responsibility to transfigure – always with God's grace – creation in both a spiritual and a material way. The eschatological vision thus creates prerequisites for this effort on the part of Christians to work for justice and peace and the integrity of creation (cf. Rom. 8:18-24).

28. Furthermore, the views about an inevitable and necessary nuclear destruction of God's creation (the so-called "Armageddon concept" found in sectarian fundamentalism) are, according to Orthodox teaching, completely unfounded and provoke new sins. According to God's promise and Testament, after the flood, such a destruction will never recur (cf. Gen. 8:21-22).

Human freedom and response

29. Humanity receives everything from God as a gift (cf. Rom. 3:23-24; 1 Cor. 12:4-7), but it receives salvation by active participation in it (cf. Thess. 5:23). The redemptive sacrifice on the Cross and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ form a blessed and dynamic reality involving the free response of humanity. Already, at its creation humanity was imbued with the dynamics of creative development through the grace of God's image which was given to it.

30. Consequently, human beings have been able to become co-workers with God responding to his calling them to be creatively masters to tend and transform the world in harmony with the divine will and purposes. Inasmuch as humanity was created in the likeness of God, it was entrusted with the task of perfecting not only human nature, but also the created nature which forms its natural habitats. Conversely, in perfecting the created world humanity contributes to its own perfection. Thus salvation goes beyond the framework of the individual human being and moves into the wider sphere of social diakonia in the Church, the society within which the Church finds itself and the wider sphere of the entire created world.

31. The understanding of salvation as a gift from God rests on the free response of human beings both in the way they think and in the way they act. By participating in the divine grace humanity experiences both the good works and the good will of the Creator. Human beings became "partakers of the divine nature" (cf. 2 Pet. 1:4) and for this reason they are instructed to respond through a certain way of life (cf. 2 Pet. 1:2-11), which implies sharing the image and likeness of God both on the personal and the social planes (cf. Rom. 12). The fact that God has endowed humanity with freedom (cf. Gal. 5:1) creates the opportunity for a positive or a negative involvement in the God-established order and harmony in the world *(sedeq)* and for the restoration of this order *(sedeqa)* (cf. Amos 5:21; Gen. 30:33).

32. Hence, humanity has been given the responsibility to work together with the grace of God in the process of salvation for personal transformation of all humanity and for renewal of the earth which is our home.

33. In the course of appropriating salvation to itself, humanity brings about the transfiguration of the material world as well, which is also God's creation, since both the spiritual and the material forms are the one reality of God's creation. Thus, Transfiguration is granted to both the human being and the material creation. The creation exists for humanity,

while humanity exists as a microcosm which is designed to bring the whole of the creation to sanctification and to fulness of life, by bringing it into communion with its Maker.

How shall Christians respond?

34. It is by the grace of God, which comes from the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit that human beings are given to follow their Lord Jesus Christ, by existing for each other in self-sacrificing love, in affirming peace and justice and in collaborating for the restoration of the integrity of the creation.

35. There is always the need for the faithful to draw on the sacramental treasures of the Church in order to live a life of prayer and ascetic discipline for personal growth in God-likeness, so as to make themselves ready to follow their Lord in the service of their fellow human-beings. This includes taking care of social structures of their bodily and spiritual needs in Christian service (diakonia). This life of selfless dedication ministers to the needs of the integral human being (soul and body) as well as that being's social milieu. It is the expression of true discipleship. "I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (cf. Matt. 25:35-37). Christians are called to respond to the problems created by human sin against justice, peace, and the integrity of creation, by taking appropriate action. "For God is at work in (us), both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). Thus the churches need to be vigilant against evil forces that operate in subtle and in overt ways against the forces of life and truth in our world.

Economic injustice

36. As churches of Jesus Christ we must challenge the sins of imposed poverty and all forms of economic injustice. We have a special responsibility to struggle for an economic order which is based on genuinely spiritual and moral values. This means we must become knowledgeable regarding the powers and forces which perpetuate economic injustice. Our pulpits cannot ignore the just needs of the economically abused. Christians in places of power need to exercise it in the spirit of Christ and against those institutional structures which perpetuate the conditions which keep poor nations and peoples subservient to the economic superpowers (cf. Deut. 15:9). Positively we need to encourage efforts at international interdependence, co-operative economic enterprise and economic support of the developing peoples and nations, always with due respect for their human dignity and integrity.

A reintegrated environment

37. The environmental crisis is a sin and a judgment upon humanity. We need to find ways, as churches, to support sound programmes which seek to preserve from pollution air, water and land. To speak of the reintegration of creation today is first to speak words of repentance and to make commitments toward the formation of a new way of living for the whole of humanity. The contemporary world must repent for the abuses which we have imposed upon the natural world, seeing it in the same kind of relationship to us as we see the unity of our human nature in both body and soul. We must begin to undo the pollution we have caused, which brings death and destruction to the mineral, vegetable and animal dimensions of the world environment. We must work and lobby in every way possible to us in our different situations to encourage the scientific community to dedicate the good potentials of science and technology to the restoration of the earth's integrity. For ourselves, this means a recommitment to the simple life which is content with necessities and – with the Church Fathers – sees unnecessary luxuriousness as the deprivation of necessities owed to the poor. In all of its aspects, concern for the reintegration of the creation calls Christians to a new affirmation of self-discipline, a renewal of the spirit of asceticism appropriate to Christians, regardless of their status, position or condition. In short, we must see the created world as our own home, and every person in it as our brother and sister whom Christ loves.

38. Words, however – even changed attitudes – will no longer suffice. Wherever we find ourselves, as Christians we need to act in order to restore the integrity of creation. A creative, cooperative, active and determined plan of action is required for implementation.

Respect for human dignity

39. We must deplore the sins which repeatedly tear apart the fabric of our common and shared humanity: racism, prejudice, discrimination. Our Lord's deep and compassionate concern for "the least of His brethren" cannot but provoke every Christian who takes seriously the call of discipleship to repent of our own abuses of justice and to raise our voices on behalf of the oppressed. One aspect of the Christian mission to the world today is to be truly apostolic in restoring fallen humanity to its divine-human dignity, as manifested in Christ. For this the Church has to express its deep-rooted commitment to justice in concrete and relevant ways in our time. We must affirm, loudly and clearly, the truth that God's image is present in every human being. We need to seek out and actively cooperate

with all forces of good working for the eradication from God's creation of all forms of prejudice and discrimination. We ourselves must teach our people to respect the integrity and dignity of all peoples of every nation, economic condition, race, sex, political affiliation, so that reconciliation and tolerance may replace coercion and violence in our relationships. Our goal is nothing less than the reign of God's love among all peoples.

Women in the world and the church

40. Both in personal attitudes and in institutional life the world has a long history during which women have been unjustly treated, and their essential humanity as God's image and likeness has not been fully respected. Such sinful divisiveness is not acceptable from an Orthodox Christian perspective (cf. 1 Cor. 11:11). In the world recreated by Christ, both male and female dimensions are integrally related to each other (cf. Gal. 3:28). The genuine harmony between these two dimensions is a symbol of the integrity of creation in its diversity. We Orthodox must recommit ourselves to the truth of our faith according to which women's true dignity is as «joint heirs to the grace of life» (cf. 1 Pet. 3:7) existing together with men. We must raise in our consciousness the important affirmation of our faith that, as members of the Body of Christ, women share in the "royal priesthood" (cf. 1 Pet. 2:9) of all believers. It is of fundamental importance in the Orthodox Church that a woman became the mother of our Incarnate Saviour and that she remains the model *par excellence* of the integral humanity to which all Christians, men and women, aspire. Historically, we have always recognized in the Church the diaconal (cf. Rom. 16:1; Tim. 5:9-10) witnessing (cf. Matt. 28:10) and nurturing roles of women (cf. 2 Tim. 5:9-10). In particular, Orthodox men must acknowledge that, as full members of the Church, women share in the intercessory vocation of the Church to stand in the presence of the Lord on behalf of all creation. In concrete terms we must find means to allow the considerable talents of women in the Church to be devoted as fully as possible in the Lord's service for the building up of the Kingdom. This means more opportunities for theological education for women and the opening of career opportunities in the Church for women. Serious consideration must be given to the re-introduction of the ancient order of Deaconess by the hierarchies of the local churches.

Towards a peaceful world

41. In the messianic prophecies one of the specific actions of humanity in building the new world is disarmament. The people of the messianic

age are presented as hammering their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks (cf. Isa. 2:4). The prophet Ezekiel speaks about making fires of the abandoned weapons. The people – says this prophet – "will not need to take wood out of the field or cut down any out of the forest, for they will make their fires of the weapons" (cf. Ez. 39:10).

42. Orthodoxy condemns war, which it considers to be the result of evil and sin in the world. The arms race has reached such proportions that its consequences go far beyond legitimate needs for defence. As Orthodox we must continuously affirm the strong bias of our Church for peace so evident in our liturgical life and in the writings of the Church Fathers. St. Nicholas Cabasilas says that "Christians, as disciples of Christ who made all things for peace, are to be 'craftsmen of peace'" – *(technitais eirenes) (Life in Christ*, P.G. 150, 676). One of the foremost responsibilities which we have today is to engage in a concerted struggle against the arms race as an evil force in our day. We must clearly declare our position on behalf of a reduction of armaments affecting all kinds of arms: both conventional and nuclear, on land, at sea, in the air and in outer space, especially in view of the fact that nuclear war can destroy all life on our planet.

43. Because we live in a new age of potential total destruction, our ongoing concern for peace takes on a greater intensity. We must join others of good will to work for peace in the world, and people must be pressured to give up the arms race and seek alternative ways of security and development for all peoples. Above all, Christians should continue to pray constantly for peace and to support all initiatives for peace based on justice.

Other concerns

44. Many other tasks relating to the integrity of creation and the world in which we live face us. Among these we mention two without developing them. Orthodox Christians and churches need to enter more fully and more responsibly into intellectual discussion of the major problems related to the integrity of creation; the considerable resources of the Orthodox faith must be brought to bear on these problems together with the insights of other faiths. This makes it imperative for the churches to use all means at their disposal, including communications/mass media to witness to the faith, especially to youth. We need a deeper and more studied approach to the contemporary issues which face us. Among those are the problems of the modern family and the stress it faces, including powerful forces seeking its disintegration.

Conclusion

45. We confess that God is the creator of all that exists, beautifully and wonderfully made, a fitting manifestation of his glory (cf. Ps. 103). But we stand today before a wounded creation which suffers under distorted conditions which are the result of the sin of humanity. In our selfishness and greed we have used our otherwise good technological abilities to exploit God's creation, to destroy the balance of nature and to deform what God originally made to be in wholesome communion with us and with Him. Creation is no longer integrated with humanity nor is it in harmony with God. In fact, it stands in danger of conflagration, in the face of nuclear war.

46. The creation needs to be reintegrated, but this can happen only as it is brought once again into communion with the Lord, so that it may find its fullness of purpose and its transfiguration. Humanity can no longer ignore its responsibility to protect it and preserve it. In order to do this, however, humanity must learn to treat the creation as a sacred offering to God, an oblation, a vehicle of grace, an incarnation of our most noble aspirations and prayers.

47. Just as bread and wine are lifted up as an offering for the sanctification of the world and all people in the Eucharist, a sacramental approach to the creation is needed for its reintegration.

48. We specifically recommend to all Orthodox churches and all Orthodox Christians that special support be given to the work of the WCC programme for "Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation" as it prepares for the forthcoming Convocation on JPIC in 1990.

49. The Lord God created His universe and all that is in it as an integrated whole. Today, we have brought about disintegration in what God intended to be integrated. We call upon individuals, nations and churches to give effect to a vision of the rightful harmony between the human dimension and the mineral, plant and animal dimensions of the creation. In spirit and in body, we are called to offer the whole of God's creation back to Him as a sacrament and as an offering cleansed, purified, restored for His sanctification of it.

50. O God, "the things that are Yours, we offer them of You according to all things and for all things. Amen." May this be our prayer for the "integrity of God's creation".

Orthodox Perspectives on Justice and Peace

Participants from various Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox churches, members of the World Council of Churches from around the world, gathered in the beautiful city of Minsk, capital of the Byelorussian Republic of the USSR, just at the very moment when the people of this great land remembered, in May 1989, the 44th anniversary of the end of the involvement of the USSR in the second world war, which is referred to here as "the Great Patriotic War". Our meeting also took place at a time of significant renewal in the political, social, civic, economic and religious structuring of the USSR. These observances and the confident spirit of anticipation for a better future served as an appropriate background for our reflection and deliberation on the inseparable issues of justice and peace in the world. We came here to consciously reflect as Orthodox Christians on these burning issues from out of the long heritage of faith and Tradition of our Church. We anticipated contributing not only to the World Council of Churches' world convocation... but also to speak to our fellow Christians and our Orthodox churches throughout the world and to encourage their own responsible spiritual and practical involvement in the issues of justice and peace in our day and for the future of all of humankind. We reflected on these matters, having before us the results of the Third Pre-conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference which took place in Chambésy, Switzerland, 28 October-6 November 1986.

I. The world searching for justice and peace

1. In each age and time of our troubled human history, the issues of justice and peace have been experienced by people in their own concrete situations. In our time this pattern is repeated, with the added dimension that all people of the earth now face these questions together. We have consciously come to understand that we are all part of one world in which

all people, nations, cultures and traditions are inextricably interconnected. As we survey our world, we are conscious of the wide-ranging expressions of injustice and the threat to peace among us.

2. At every step in our lives today we are faced with manifestations of injustice. Some of these signs blatantly and directly threaten humanity and others lead gradually to the potential destruction of God's creation. Among the many concerns we have as we survey our condition on the threshold of the twenty-first century, we note some specific anxieties for the future of our planet and the people who live upon it, brought about by injustices perpetrated today and the consequent threat to genuine peace.

The unjust treatment of the planet earth

3. The irresponsible and thoughtless misuse of natural resources creates a condition we have come to identify as the "hot-house effect" upon the earth. This consists in part of the warming up of the earth's atmosphere, the thinning of the ozone layer and an increase in radiation. Connected with this are other irresponsible and unjust activities which have led to deforestation and desertification of huge areas caused by the depletion of the rain forests and many non-renewable resources. All of this and other consequences arise from the unjust treatment of the planet by human beings. It is the result of the misuse of the wisdom gained through scientific research and technological advancement. In many areas these human accomplishments bring mixed blessings. For example, while genetic engineering and advances in biotechnology may be considered a blessing in therapeutic practices in medicine, they are also potential manifestations of injustice because of the threat posed in the field of mutation.

Injustice in military over-emphasis

4. While we see some encouraging steps being taken by all nations in the area of limitations of armaments, we also note that nations continue to allocate a major percentage of their national budgets to arms production in the name of national security or defence. The phenomenon of the arms race and the exaggerated sale of arms continue to be imposed upon third-world nations. An illustration of this is the reported information that in some developing countries per capita public expenditure for military purposes is US$42, while per capita public expenditure for health services amounts to only US$11.[1]

5. Another problem, specific to the church, is the dilemma presented by the phenomenon of Christian participation in war. The Orthodox

Church unreservedly condemns war as evil. Yet it also recognizes that in the defence of the innocent and the protection of one's people from unjust attack, criminal activity and the overthrowing of oppression, it is sometines necessary, with reluctance, to resort to arms. In every case, such a decision must be taken with full consciousness of its tragic dimensions. Consequently, the Greek fathers of the Church have never developed a "just war theory", preferring rather to speak of the blessings of and the preference for peace.

Economic injustice

6. Injustices tend to be interconnected. The two preceding examples show that many of the nations of the world and their people have been led into new forms of economic injustice. Today's international debt crisis is the result of the mismanagement of resources both in developing and developed countries. Misdirected enthusiasm and misguided efforts in development planning in the 70s have left the world today with the following reality. In 1985, the poorest fifth of the world's population had access to 1.6% of the total world Gross National Product (GNP), and the richest fifth accounted for 74.2% of the world GNP.[2] The world is marked by an unjust distribution of goods and, more importantly, by an unjust distribution of power.

7. Similarly, evidence indicates that in many nations, both poor and rich, the concentration of wealth in the hands of fewer and fewer persons results in an increase of poverty for more and more persons. The widening of the gap between the rich and the poor is highlighted by the demographic trends of higher infant mortality and shorter life expectancy. Many people in the third-world countries are deprived of basic human needs such as adequate health services, proper housing, clothing, sufficient food, and educational opportunities. In short, they lack the bare minimum for survival. While indebtedness was not the choice made by the common citizen in any country, in all these countries it is these people who suffer to enable the respective government to repay its debts.

Injustice and the institutions of social life

8. These threats raise human and social problems which further increase the burden of injustice on society. A critical example is the family. This important social institution and basis of social stability and human well-being is weakening. In many industrialized societies broken families have become a common phenomenon and in the third-world societies the extended family is gradually being replaced by the nuclear

family. Alienation, alcoholism, drugs, street children, child abuse, and widespread abortion are blatant manifestations of this brokenness in our society, due to economic and systemic causes. Together with these problems, new patterns have arisen in society with consequent new roles for men and women. In particular, women are now participating in social, economic, political and educational spheres of life, and yet certain traditions still continue to discriminate against them and their full participation in the life of church and society.

9. Injustice against people is also manifested within and among nations and societies because of their race, colour, creed, ethnic identity and culture. Great numbers of people continue to suffer displacement and to live as refugees, some even within their own homelands, such as the Palestinian people. Economic and political injustices as well as various kinds of prejudice have led to the mass uprooting of people, causing migrations with all the negative consequences for personal, family and social life of these fellow human beings. We note as well that the communications media in one aspect of their expansion, through the quick dissemination of information and images, brings people together, thus pointing to our shared destiny as one world. But at the same time much is disseminated which threatens our basic human values.

10. In all this, human rights are repeatedly being disregarded in many places throughout the world. As believers we are especially concerned with religious rights. Religious persecution and intolerance have not disappeared among us in spite of decades of ecumenical activity and concern, and in some places it has been virulently oppressive. In some situations elementary religious education is made difficult or impossible.

11. In conjunction with this, the phenomenon of proselytism among Christians is a sad witness to the world, which in practice betrays our words of brotherhood and peace. Particularly as Orthodox, we have, in the past, suffered much from proselytism in its many forms, including the Uniate question. Today we see that the plague of proselytism continues in such places as the Middle East and Ethiopia, especially in the midst of crisis situations. An example of this behaviour was how relief efforts after the recent Armenian earthquake were used by some to persuade the Armenian Orthodox Christians to abandon their Church.

12. Above and beyond all of this there is the threat of nuclear war and destruction. Demonic forces pervade and often seem to control the destiny of our earth and all the people seeking to live their lives upon it. Injustice and the ongoing threats to peace provoke cries for healing and restoration from all of humanity and from the earth itself. In response, we

turn to our faith as believing Orthodox Christians for wisdom, guidance and salvation.

II. The response of faith in the face of injustice and threats to peace

13. As Orthodox Christian believers our most precious resource in the face of such terrible problems is the awareness of God's active love and presence in history for the salvation of the world. This is communicated to us in the revelation of God as it is experienced in the life of the church. Space does not permit us to plumb the vast resources of the Holy Tradition in order to explicate all of its potential relevance to the issues of injustice and justice, and the demand for peace in the hearts of all right-thinking persons and nations. The experience of the saving presence of God's love for us, his creatures, has provided us with understandings which have been theologically articulated in the teaching, creeds and affirmations of faith in the church. From these many resources for insight in the face of injustice and the threats to peace we lift up these few affirmations for the attention of all.

14. In the Orthodox perspective the created world is the work of the Triune God. The original status of the creation expressed a communion and harmony (the biblical peace, shalom) in process of fulfilment, which finds its ground in the perfect personal relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

15. The Old and the New Testaments are records of the revelation that humankind is sick in the centre of its personal existence. Through sin, which is the loss of illumination or glorification, which is alienation from God, the "heart" has been "darkened" (Rom. 1:21). Believing that this state is normal for their lives, human beings have come to make God in their own fallen or sick image. The heart is the primary organ of communion with God, which makes human beings both free of the environment and yet active participants in it. The disruption of this communion with God causes the heart to become dominated by and enslaved to the environment through confusion of its own intellectual reasoning which gives rise to self-centred love, injustice and aggression in relation to others. Herein is the root cause of idolatry, injustice, exploitation and belligerance in humanity and the lack of peace among human beings.

16. For the Orthodox Church, the restoration of justice and peace cannot be measured merely by human standards, but by the divine-human standard of Jesus Christ, who is at the heart of the "good news" to the fallen world. The Christological standard rests upon the union of the

divine and the human in the one person of Jesus Christ and upon his victory over death, sin and evil through his resurrection which followed upon his own unjust suffering and crucifixion. This unique event of the just God becoming a just man in the midst of an unjust humanity, and his willingness to suffer unjustly at the hands of the unjust for their salvation is for us the profound basis not only for the understanding of justice, but also for our solidarity with all those who suffer injustice.

17. Through his death, Christ has destroyed in principle the power of sin and death, which are the primary causes of injustice, and through his resurrection, Christ has made eternal peace between God and humanity, among human beings as well as with the created world itself. This is the "new creation".

18. For the Christian, this restoration of justice and peace brings liberation of the human heart through its purification from all thoughts, both good and bad, so that it may be filled with the prayer of the Holy Spirit. This process allows it to regain full communion with God. This communion of the human with the divine is the beginning of the restoration of justice and peace, which are gifts of God to us, leading to the transformation of selfish love into selfless love. This is our participation in the mystery of the cross and the resurrection of Christ.

19. Participation in the mystery of the cross is perfected by glorification, which is to see Christ resurrected in glory, together with the bestowal of perfect justice, peace and reconciliation with the Father and the gift of selfless love.

20. The fullness of justice and the establishment of peace in human relations can thus only come with this renewal in Christ and the communion with the Holy Spirit in the lives of men and women. Social justice and social peace can approximate it only inasmuch as God's peace and God's justice are realized in the illumination and glorification of those who share in the common life of society. To this the life of the church is witness.

21. The church is the true Body of Christ. In this new ecclesial reality everything is recapitulated in Christ and the common spiritual experience of the ecclesial community removes the estrangement of individuals from each other, because it is based on an ontological unity expressed in the historical reality of the Body of Christ. The church, as the Body of Christ, projects in space and time the historical embodiment of the gospel and the realization of the living experience of the Christian faith.

22. But the Christian message of peace and justice goes further, to address all dimensions of human existence, thus becoming a judgment upon the world as a whole. The concern is not only with theologizing

about earthly realities, but also in seeing earthly realities as God's continuing work in history through his church and with the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

23. It is true that Christian life has not always manifested the profound reality of the prophetic and sacramental message of peace and justice in its fullness, but there is always a conscious and positive declaration of peace and justice in the ecclesial experience. In this perspective it is clear that the spiritual process of human participation in the peace and justice of Christ is a continuous spiritual struggle, in which characteristics of both the weakness of human nature and its forward movement towards God-likeness continue to rise and fall. Nevertheless Christians are mandated to work synergetically with God in his oikonomia of the eschatological restoration and transfiguration of his creation.

24. In our age, the severing of the world from the living ecclesial experience and the ongoing profanation of society in modern times has challenged fundamental Christian affirmations on the relationship of God, humanity and the world. The era of ideological secularization has proclaimed a radical apostasy from these Christian affirmations. The church is not any more the only teaching authority, because in greater or lesser measure, various ideologies declare messages antithetical to the Christian message. This spiritual dichotomy of modern society is the challenge of the age for the church as it seeks to provide a vision of the genuine source of justice and peace for the world today. It is a vision which the world desperately needs to hear, adopt and realize in practice. The church does this not to project upon the world its own "ideology" in the place of others, but because without the saving and redeeming participation in the justice and peace of God, all our efforts are destined to fail. It is for this reason that the vision of the church concerns itself with the whole human being, with the whole of social life, with the whole of the physical and spiritual environment of our planet. Ours is, finally, an eschatological vision, in which we humbly recognize that justice and peace are of God; it is he who brings it into reality. Our task is to work with God's purpose so that justice and peace may reign on earth and among all people.

III. Orthodox Christians responding to the demands of justice and peace

25. It is not enough for us simply to theologize, to describe and to prescribe regarding the Orthodox vision of justice and peace. We must also mobilize and work together for God's purpose to defeat injustices

and to establish justice wherever possible, as well as to overcome the forces which threaten peace on earth. In order to realize God's peace and justice on earth, we are called as Christians always and everywhere to be "servants of God" (Rom. 6:22) and "co-workers with God" (1 Cor. 3:9) by being obedient to His will and by imitating the example of our Lord and the saints of his church. We see this task as a clarion call to ourselves as Orthodox, first in our existence on the personal, the ecclesial and outreach levels.

The personal dimension

26. In our personal Christian lives, we are expected to acknowledge experientially that each Christian is called to be a peace-maker and a worker for justice in his or her personal life. Every Orthodox Christian has received the holy calling to realize and promote justice in the concrete and specific social environment in which he or she lives. This calling has been concretely received through the sacraments of baptism and chrismation by which we have each one of us been incorporated into the Body of Christ and have begun our growth in illumination and glorification, as members of God's royal priesthood and holy nation (cf. 1 Pet. 2:9). Having thus received the Holy Spirit and having become children of God, we are endowed with both responsibility and power to be peace-makers and advocates of justice.

27. This calling of all Christians presupposes that we constantly stay at the source of divine peace which is possible only in the constant sacramental communion of the church and the personal life of prayer. The prayers of the church together with the Holy Scriptures and Holy Tradition give to each of us the right orientation and the concrete guidelines and ideals for our lives.

28. It is not always possible, however, to live up to these ideals due to our human weakness and our lack of progress in growing in illumination and towards glorification and God-likeness, which is our sin. Therefore, repentance must be a permanent attitude and stance in life for us, a reality which also belongs to the sacramental life of the church as a normal element in its life.

29. This attitude leads Christian men and women not only to humility, but also to an ascetic approach to life, which prevents them from submission to such things as excessive consumerism, materialistic attitudes, and the greedy exploitation of others and the natural resources of earth. This perspective, as well, constantly reminds Christians of the needs of other persons who are also created in the likeness of God.

According to the principles of the Christian faith, every human being should be considered by fellow human beings as a person created in God's image, and not simply as a statistical unit, or as a unit of material labour or a unit of consumption. We must relate with our fellow human beings in imitation of God's philanthropic love for all of his creatures. Consequently, Christians are called always to be aware of the needs not only of fellow Christians, but of all people who are in need of the necessities of life.

30. As a result, in their personal lives, Christian men and women have to be constantly vigilant and alert to the personal and social injustices in their surroundings, injustices which are at the heart of the disturbances of peace and harmony among persons and in the social environment. We must, with the grace of God, seek the gift of seeing the sin and evil present in the world. Christian men and women must also have the courage to spell out the injustices which they see, even though this might require them to make personal sacrifices. These sacrifices will include costly involvement and action. After all, every Christian is called to identify his or her life with that of Christ, not only in the glory of the Resurrection, but also in his suffering.

In ecclesial life

31. We are Christians not only in the context of secular life, but there must also be an imperative for justice and peace in our ecclesial life. Peace and justice are the essence of the gift given to us by Christ, but they are also essential aspects for the programme entrusted to us by the Lord for fulfilment as part of our contribution to the world and the society in which we live, beginning with the very life of the church itself.

32. Certainly our ecclesial concern with peace and justice begins with our commonly shared prayer for justice and peace. Orthodox Christian men and women are called to offer constant and fervent prayers for peace, reconciliation and justice in mutual relations among people, in the church, between nations and in all the world. Prayers for justice and peace must be made in all of our daily and Sunday services, but not only generally. We must offer to God fervent prayers for peace in specific conflict areas, for a just distribution of the material goods of life among all peoples, for the protection and comfort of those who are suffering and for the final triumph of justice and peace.

33. But there is also a need for both guidance and encouragement for the bishops and priests and laity of the church to teach the people, preach

to the congregations and inspire the youth of the church to be sensitive to the issues of justice and peace and to address them in practical ways. We must lift up in the consciousness of the church, the peace-making character of Christianity and the Christian duty to serve the cause of peace and justice.

34. But in addition, we must learn to use the expertise of the the church's members who are specialized in the areas of sociology, economics, politics, ecology, medicine, etc., in order to help raise the consciousness and understanding of the faithful in the practical spheres of justice and peace work. It would be useful to designate one week each year throughout the world, dedicated to the issues of justice and peace. During this week, prayers, gatherings, presentations, seminars and discussions could be held with the intention of enhancing the awareness of Christians towards these issues.

35. Other corporate programmes are also needed. We can try to accomplish this through meetings held at times other than those of public worship; through the Church's periodical press in which peace and justice concerns should take a permanent place; through theological studies and the development of social ethical disciplines in all of our seminaries and theological schools; through regional, diocesan, national and international gatherings devoted to peace and justice issues in cooperation with fellow Christians of other church bodies, with non-Christian religious peoples and groups and with non-believers of good will everywhere.

36. As a church we are called to develop sensitivity to the way we function and live out our ecclesial existence at all levels of church life. As such, it is important that we not only speak about justice and peace, but also develop projects and contribute practically in programmes and sustained organized activity on behalf of the concrete realization of the values of justice and peace in our ecclesial life. In this regard the church must learn to dialogue especially with non-church bodies to find the most suitable common ways for the implementation of justice and peace.

Outreach

37. The church lives not only for itself, but also for the life of the world. There is an outreach dimension to the Christian faith which seeks to bring the saving message of the Gospel to all men and women, which in Christ's compassion seeks to meet the suffering and injustices experienced by our fellow human beings in their immediate needs for

care, sustenance and protection. There is the Christian concern for the very orders and structures of the societies in which we live which oppress people, or contribute to the danger of war, or institutionalize injustice.

38. On the international level, the Orthodox commitment to justice and peace can be most effective and influential, and could give good results through our active and close cooperation with all other Christian churches within the framework of the ecumenical movement. Our membership in the World Council of Churches and participation in similar international and regional ecumenical bodies and organizations helps to mobilize and unite all spiritual and social forces in the common struggle for justice and peace. Indeed, Christians must consider every injustice done to anyone else as a demand for their own response.

39. Justice and peace are equally necessary for all people, and because of this, under the auspices of agencies such as the United Nations, we welcome cooperation on these issues with all people of good will, irrespective of their religious and political convictions. The main and most urgent task in this sphere of activity is to reduce the danger of nuclear holocaust, which would mean, in practice, the end of life on our planet. For this, we must reverse the arms race and help the nations move from confrontation to serious and practical negotiations about disarmament and cooperation in building a world free of nuclear weapons. For this to happen, Christians can help to increase the confidence of nations regarding each other and so lead towards increased understanding and trust.

40. We welcome the positive changes in the climate of international relations in recent times and express our hope and prayers that we and all of humanity may see the end of the second millenium of the Christian era, as a victory of justice and peace for all of God's people.

41. But for this to occur, it is quite obvious that it is necessary to make profound changes in the contemporary system of social mechanisms which not only produce great misery based upon injustice and exploitation, but also, for the same reason are fraught with permanent dangers of militarism and wars, which can destroy the whole of humanity and the very life on earth.

42. In all things we put our trust for our future and that of the world in the hands of the God of justice and peace. Clement of Rome spoke of peace whose meaning, as we have seen, includes the idea of justice. We conclude with his words: "... Let us run on to the goal of peace, which was handed down to us from the beginning. Let us fix our eyes on the

Father and Creator of the universe and cling to his magnificent and excellent gifts of peace and kindness to us...." (I Clement, 19:2).

NOTES

[1] Ruth, Leger Sivard, *World Military and Social Expenditures 1987-88*, 12th ed., pp.46-47.
[2] *Ibid.*, p.21.

Christian Witness to Peace and Justice

VITALY BOROVOY

Witness and repentance

The church is called to be the conscience of society; therefore as Christians we are also called to be the conscience of our societies. "You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:13-14), said the Lord, and because of this we are called to be not only servants, but also watchmen. "These are the words of the Lord: go, post a watchman to report what he sees", "He is alert, alert, always on the alert"; and "All day long I stand on the Lord's watch-tower, and night after night I keep my station" (Isa. 21:6, 7, 8). Let us humbly confess here, that Christians — and especially we, their theologians — for centuries have been disobedient to the Lord's calling to be the salt and the light of the world, to be vigilant watchmen in the midnight of the present time. Let us cry unto the Lord and implore his mercy. This confession is not — or should not be — an emotional, pious and cheap statement of regret and shame, it is — or should be — a sign of *metanoia*, a costly *metanoia*, because: "Nobody puts new wine into old wineskins; if he does, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and the skins too. No, new wine, fresh skins" (Mark 2:21-22).

What is to be seen from the watch-tower?

And what is the vision which is seen by the watchman from his watch-tower in our time? It can be best described in the words of Martin Luther King of blessed memory and faithful witness to the Lord:

> It is midnight in our world and darkness is so deep that we can hardly see which way to turn. It is midnight within the social order. On the international horizon nations are engaged in a colossal and bitter contest for supremacy. Two world wars have been fought within a generation, and the clouds of another war are dangerously low. Man now has atomic and nuclear weapons

> that could within seconds completely destroy the whole world and annihilate the human race...It is also midnight within the moral order. Moral perspectives have lost their distinctiveness. For modern man, absolute right and absolute wrong are a matter of what the majority is doing... Right and wrong are related to likes and dislikes and the customs of a particular community. We have unconsciously applied Einstein's theory of relativity, which properly described the physical universe, to the moral and ethical reality. The Darwinian concept of the survival of the fittest has been substituted by a philosophy of the survival of the slickest. This mentality has brought a tragic breakdown of moral standards, and the midnight of moral degeneration deepens.

Another sharp-sighted watchman, this time from France, André Malraux, launched a desperate cry: "No civilization has been so powerful, none has been so ignorant of its values. Why conquer the moon in order to commit suicide there?"[1]

This alarming cry sounds like Jeremiah and his lamentations: "We looked for peace, but no good came, for a time of healing, but behold, terror!" (Jer. 8:15). "Remember, O Lord, what has befallen us, and see our disgrace!" (Lam. 5:1). "...That you may not grieve as others do who have no hope" (1 Thes. 4:13): for such people it is an almost desperate situation. But we all are called to the "one hope" (Eph. 4:4), not shifting from the hope of the gospel (Col. 1:23), and this hope does not disappoint us. (Rom. 5:5). "In the world you will have tribulations but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering for he who promised is faithful" (Heb. 10:23), because God...never lies (Tit. 1:2). When the apostles impatiently asked the risen Lord whether the time had come (Acts 1:6) and when Isaiah asked God: "How long, O Lord, how long?" (Isa. 6:11), the Lord reminded his disciples, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority." And God answered the anxiety of another faithful watchman, the prophet Habakkuk (and this is relevant for us also): "At the destined hour it will come in breathless haste; It will not fail. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay" (2:3).

The question of the future of Christianity

"And you shall be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8) says the Lord. And what does it mean, "even to the ends of the earth?" It means to be witnesses everywhere for all and in all.

"Christian Perspectives and Witness to Peace and Justice" is no theme for an abstract classical theology. Nor does it raise questions of strategy

and methods for Christian participation in movements for peace and justice in the world. The theme is really the future of Christianity and the church, their role and place in the future history of humankind.

Faced with the growing and spreading process of secularization and de-Christianization in the modern world, people used to speak of a crisis of faith, of a crisis of Christianity, of a crisis of the church. They argue about reasons, dimensions and consequences of this historical phenomenon.

The fact of the crisis is clear, and nobody has any doubts about that. Demographic data show that the proportion of Christians and non-Christians is rapidly changing, not in favour of Christians. At the beginning of our era the whole population of the earth was no more than 30 million. At the beginning of the twentieth century there were one and a half billion, half a billion of them being Christian (i.e., 1 to 3). At the present time there are 4 billion people, about 1 billion of them Christian (i.e. 1 to 4; or even 1 to 5). In the twenty-second and twenty-third centuries — taking into account the growth of population and development of medical care, the maximum population is expected to be 30 billion, the minimum 11 billion, and the proportion of Christians to non-Christians would be about 1 to 8 (or even 1 to 9). In the West the prognosis is even worse — one or two percent of believers.[2] And Christians will be (and are already) obliged to witness to Christ as a small minority, amidst indifferent and even hostile attitudes to their witness. What must the witness of Christians be in such historical conditions if it is to be able — like the witness of the apostles and the first Christians — to reach again all everywhere "to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8), reach, grow and bear fruit, a hundredfold? (Luke 8:8; Math. 13:8; Mark 4:8).

Witness in the ancient church

The apostles and the first Christians brought the good news of the word of life first as a small minority facing an alien and hostile pagan (non-believing) or Jewish majority. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands; concerning the word of life — the life was made manifest and we saw it and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us — that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We are writing this that our joy may be complete" (1 John 1:1-4).

1. This was a concrete witness through a direct involvement (seen with our own eyes...touched with our hands...our fellowship...).

2. This was concrete "good news of life" in all its fullness.

3. This was witness of a new life: "the world of the past has gone...now I am making the whole of creation new".

4. This was a call to all to participate in this fullness of life to the full: "Come to me all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light..." (Math. 11:28-30).

5. This was a joyous call for fratermal union "so that you may have union — *koinonia*" — for a union in joy of this new common life, "to make your joy complete".

6. Such a testimony found its way to the hearts of people: "And day by day...praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47).

7. This testimony brought a great number of pagans to Christ "...this is the victory over the world, our faith" (1 John 5:4).[3]

8. The witness demanded and called to active struggle for the truth of witness. This was a heroic act (*agôn*). And the witnesses were fighters (athletes).[4]

9. The witness is always combined with readiness to sacrifice, to sacrifice oneself for the truth of the witness.

10. And so the witness in the ancient church was always close to a potential martyrdom in the struggle for the truth of the witness. An ancient Christian witness (martyr) is always a potential and often actual martyr.[5]

11. The Lord Jesus Christ calls himself a martyr — the faithful, the true witness (Rev. 3:14; 1:5), and martyrs his witnesses — "...My faithful witness, Antipas, was killed..." (Rev. 2:13), "the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (Rev. 17:6), "the blood of Stephen thy witness was shed" (Acts 22:20).

12. But Jesus is called also the apostle...of our confession (Heb. 3:1) and appoints the apostles to be his witnesses — martyrs (Acts 1:8); and the apostles call their mission "*tyn martyrian Iisu Christou*" (Rev. 1:3). And so the witness is a continuation of the apostolic ministry in the world — an apostolic ministry which is always a potential (and often also active) martyrdom, i.e., it is always connected with the readiness to sacrifice oneself for the truth of the witness.

13. The service of the witness — like an apostolic ministry — is always important and responsible, but it is always connected with danger and

sacrifice, for a witness — martyr — is witnessing not common truths but the truths which are often rejected by most people. Martyr often carries out alone or with a small minority his ministry of the witness to the truth.

Witness in the modern world

What must the Christian witness be in the modern, rapidly de-Christianising world? There could be only one answer. The witness of modern Christians must be similar to the witness of the apostles and first Christians in the pagan Greek and Roman society of that time. It must be a continuation of the apostolic service in the world. It must find a way to the hearts of the people — "enjoying the favour of all the people" (Acts 2:47). But how can modern Christianity find a way to the hearts of the people, enjoy the favour of all the people? What kind of life, what kind of a fullness of life, what kind of fraternal "union in a complete joy" will it proclaim? Christianity came to the world as a religion of love and fraternity, as the good news that "God is love" (1 John 4:8) "that we are to love one another" (1 John 3:1), "For you have only one teacher, the Christ...and you are all brothers" (Matt. 23:8); but meanwhile Christianity in the third world is considered as a religion of "oppressors".

The population of developed countries which make up only 20% of the whole population of the world possess 42% of the total pasture, 45% of forest, 47% of arable land. Seventy percent of the world population live on 30% of the world's production, the other 30% consume 70%. The poorest of the developing countries have 30% of the world population and only 3% of world production. According to the data of 1980, almost one-third (800 million) of the population of the developing countries live on a level which is lower than the level of "absolute poverty". The common ration of their food is lower than that of the prisoners of the concentration camp at Auschwitz.

The gap between the income per capita in very poor and very rich countries is in the proportion of 1 to 60. A similar or even a bigger gap exists in the consumption of energy. An average American consumes more energy than two Germans, more than three Swiss (or Austrians) more than 60 Indians, and 1,100 times more than people in Ruanda.

In developing countries there is one doctor for 3,700 people, but one soldier for 250 people. As a result of such a crying gap between the wealth of the capitalist countries and the poverty of the developing countries, the average age of life in many countries is about 30 years.

Infant mortality is a tragic phenomenon. The year 1979 was proclaimed the "International Year of the Child". According to the data of the United

Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) more than 12 million children died this year from hunger, malnutrition and quite curable diseases. According to the number of victims it means that there were about 85 Hiroshimas.

It is known that to supply and feed the population of the whole world with what they really need for their life in one year, 20 billion dollars are needed; meanwhile, for military purposes more than 600 billion are being spent, i.e., more than 8 million dollars every minute.

The facts show that the cost of one day of war production would be enough to save the lives of 21 million children who die from hunger and disease.[6]

There are many similar examples, but these are enough to understand why Christianity does not enjoy the favour of all people (Acts 2:47).

"There are no longer blind or naive people, there are only co-participants," said Albert Camus. Co-participants in the crime against humanity as they are, "Christians see the poverty, they do not see the machine that has produced the poverty."

It is quite obvious that it is necessary to make profound changes in the system which not only produces poverty and is based on injustice and exploitation, but which is also, for the same reason, fraught with permanent danger of a war which could destroy the whole of humanity and life on earth itself.

And if in daily life and experience Christianity is connected with such a system, then quite naturally the Christian witness and the good news of "life in its fullness" and "complete joy" (1 John 1:1-4) will be considered as "opium for the people".

Old yeast and new dough

The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians and the same words can be addressed to us: "Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed. Let us, therefore, celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. 5:6,8).

The church and the witness of Christians in the modern world must be a new dough. For that we must get rid of the old yeast. But this is a very painful process. Einstein was right when he said that it is easier to split the atom than to change the mentality of people. Renewal reminds us of the difficult process of healing a sick organism and of the slow recovery after

a serious disease. One author had the courage to speak of this process as like a cancer operation — one which destroys the inner balance of the church organism.

The process of renewal is a dialectic of inter-related successes, misfortunes and hesitations in the transition period of crisis between disease and recovery, as Antonio Gramsci once said: "The new is not yet born, and the old does not wish to die".

The process of renewal and recovery demands and helps the church:

— to learn anew to recognize the "signs of the times";
— to understand the demands of modern times;
— to listen to the needs of people;
— to read and re-read anew the gospel as the good news for our time;
— to be the church of the poor and for the poor in the world in a deep economic and social crisis, full of contradictions, struggle, poverty and exploitation;
— in the world full of violence, social injustice, violation of human rights and human dignity — to be a church serving all those labouring and burdened, all oppressed, deprived and humiliated;
— in the world of powerful political forces, in the world full of struggle for influence, meaning and superiority — to be a church of the humble and for the humble;
— in the world of different cultures and constant searching for new cultural values — to be a searching, studying, investigating church;
— in the world of rapid and various changes and mutations — to be a young and prophetic church, a church of the future;
— in the world of divided and separated Christians — to be an ecumenical church striving for unity of all Christians and restoration of unity and universal *koinonia* of all Christians in the one church;
— in the world full of animosity between nations, states, cultures and ideologies — to be a church of reconciliation and a sign of unity of humanity and of a universal fraternity of a renewed human community.

And only if in the process of recovering and renewal of the church all the above-mentioned elements (or aspects) of a sound growth of the church organism can be present, only then can the church successfully fulfil its main purpose — to be a witness to the good news of Jesus Christ "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8), and the witness will find the way to the hearts of all people. And the church again will enjoy the favour of all the people, and the Lord shall day by day add to the number of those whom he is saving (Acts 2:47).

Methodological narrow-mindedness of one-dimensional Christianity

The fullness of Christian witness in the area of peace and justice is often prevented by a methodological narrow-mindedness of the modern radical theology of "one-dimensional Christianity".

Sometimes this is called "social context" (or "concern") among Christian radical youth, and the intelligentsia formulate a type of Christian activist of an absolutely "one-dimensional kind" as in "One-Dimensional Man".[7] Only here, this "social type" is formulated not in a bourgeois but in a revolutionary context of the secular Christian West or of developing countries in the third world.

The danger of such a "one-dimensional" Christianity lies in the impoverishment of its witness to the good news, passing over in silence the fullness of the gospel of the kingdom of God.

Cardinal Danielou said something very good about this one-sidedness soon after the stormy year 1968 in Paris: "For many Christians, love of neighbour and service to others are the very substance of Christianity. To say this already means that one has become an atheist, it means that the relation to God is not as substantial as the relation to other people. This emphasis on exclusiveness of relations to neighbours is very dangerous. It affects in Christianity something that belongs to its very substance, i.e., on what we can be in our relation to God."[8]

Concerning the methodological "one-dimensionalism" of the Latin American theology of liberation Moltmann wrote in "Faith-Conversations with contemporary theologians"[9] about the possibility of a direct relation to God.[10]

Yves Congar in his excellent book *"Un peuple Messianique — Salut et Libération"*,[11] analyzing the radicalism of the youth movement 1968, came to the conclusion that before 1968 progressive Christian circles spoke of "faith and politics", but after 1968 started to speak of "politics and faith", with politics taking a superior and decisive position.[12] The danger of a one-sided and extreme social horizontalism in the understanding of salvation to the detriment of external divine aspects of the primordial Christian teaching and faith of the whole church since the time of the apostles, was pointed out in the Message of the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church to the Central Committee of the WCC after the conference in Bangkok 1973.

This one-dimensional one-sidedness of modern radical Christianity not only impoverishes and distorts all the diversity and richness of the fullness of the Christian good news of "new and eternal life", but tactically also deters many Christians from full involvement in the world

movement for peace and social justice, making them — educated in traditional piety — fear its radical and extremely critical, revolutionary-secular phraseology with regard to church Christianity that often looks like a political statement rather than a Christian witness to the good news of Christ about peace, love, brotherhood and justice.

Fullness of witness: correction of any one dimension

If one speaks of the excesses and one-dimensionalism of radical Christian involvement in modern problems, one must not forget that this "one-dimension" was and is a natural reaction and protest against another one-dimensionalism of the past more harmful to Christian witness, that even to our shame, persists today when churches and millions of Christians have forgotten and still forget the struggle against social and political evils — against social injustice, exploitation, oppression, slavery, poverty and starvation among many millions of their brothers and sisters in all times and places: the churches passed over in silence and often even justified murder, genocide of whole nations, aggressive local wars, and (finally) atom bombs and the new mad arms race in order to achieve a military superiority that brings the world to the brink of a new nuclear holocaust threatening the whole of life and civilization on our planet. And all this is combined with Christianity and even justified in the name of this one-dimensional and distorted Christianity.

Facing such "one-dimensionalism" one can also understand and explain the "noble one-sidedness" of radical Christians and modern radical Christianity. One can understand but not justify. For the fullness and success of Christian witness to peace and justice in the world of today, it is necessary to avoid the extremes of any sort of one-dimensional Christianity, for any such Christianity is a pseudo-Christianity, i.e. an "ultra-right" or "ultra-left" ideology Christianized by theological religious phrases. Christianity is not an ideology, it is the good news of the fullness of the new life.

The historical experience of the Russian Orthodox Church

After the Revolution (1917) our church began to live and witness to Christ in a radically new historical situation in a socialist, Soviet society — a society mainly secularized and considered to be unbelieving, in a situation of complete separation of church from state and church from school. The existence of the church depends completely on believers. The only source of funds for the church's needs for its existence and its expenses is the collections, offerings of believers, the candles and

prosphoras bought during the liturgy, their free offerings for rites and prayers for the dead at the request of the faithful. The only form of Christian education for the believers is the worship, the prayers, the icons, the pastoral care provided at the request of the believers, the reading of the Word of God, hymns and sermons at the worship service and the personal witness of the believers in word and deed in their personal and social lives.

Millions of people left the church and now the third generation of young people are being educated by the state in a-religious schools or universities. The church does not use mass media or other means of promotion (radio, cinema, TV, press, mass publications, sports, youth or women's clubs and all kinds of other societies and organizations).

All these means of mass influence and education belong to the state and public organizations and are a-religious or often even anti-religious.

At the Revolution, the church was not prepared politically and organizationally to live in such new circumstances, since before it our church was an established state church closely linked to the whole political and social system of Tsarist Russia and enjoying the full support of the state.

And although these were completely new political and public circumstances to us for our witness, we were theologically and psychologically to some degree prepared through the earlier development of Russian theological and religious philosophical thought at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries.

From the very beginning Russian religio-philosophical and theological thought was marked by a sincere and deep social feeling of compassion. It was always aimed at the "common task", inspired by the idea of the "kingdom of God" and an impatient faith in its imminent coming. At the same time, Russian religious-philosophical thought was concrete, positive, pragmatic, proposing "projects" for transforming the world through fraternal union of people in a "holy communion", in a just order of society. Russian thinkers always wanted and strove for real acts, for immediate realization of words in actions. We may openly say that in no Christian country were the social nature of Christianity and the task of salvation of the "kingdom of the world" perceived as deeply as in Russian religious thought.

All streams of Russian philosophy, both those which confessed Christ and those which rejected him (Slavophile and Westernizing, populism and socialism, anarchism and Tolstoyism) were in fact experiences of the Christian spirit, events of our Christian history, witnesses of extremely intense religious-social searchings in the depths and sources of all these streams.

This social pathos of Russian religious-philosophical thought, its searching for the kingdom of God as peace and justice on earth, its service to the "common task" of a salvation of all people and the construction of a new, just and human society for all people, helped our church in the difficult time of her life and witness in new and unfamiliar historical circumstances to find new ways to the hearts of her people, new means and forms for her witness of Christ to her secularized brothers and sisters — the children of her people and her history, although not believers but still children of one God of all of us. The ways shown by our church to her people were selfless commitment to Christ, commitment to others and the holy task of salvation, willingness to share their lives, joys and troubles, successes and misfortunes, active participation in the construction of a new life, of a more just society. And because our people suffered more than others from the war and social disorder as a result of the unjust arms race threatening their peaceful activities and of militarism in international relations, so the church immediately after the war involved itself in the proclamation of peace and justice, in peace activities and witness together with all people of good will, irrespective of their political or religious convictions. The church started sincerely to help her people and their peace-loving forces to prevent the danger of a new war and to stop the arms race, and in international relations to move ahead from confrontation to serious and practical negotiations about disarmament and cooperation.

In the period of the Cold War many people did not understand the pathos of our witness for peace and justice and misinterpreted its nature and its aims. But we persisted in our witness and service to peace and justice. Both our witness and our service found a way to the hearts of the people. Now our church has millions and millions of faithful, our churches are full of believers, a new generation of believers is growing up. Growing also is the number of those who with sympathy and understanding respect our witness for peace and justice. Our witness is respected not only in our society, but also enjoys a broad international respect. A convincing and eloquent proof of that is the success of the two great international religious conferences held in Moscow in 1978 and 1982. Thousands of representatives of all religions and faiths in the world actively and unanimously supported our activities for peace and justice, and participated in these big and representative international conferences. The experience of our church shows that Christian witness on questions of peace and justice is a true Christian witness which can find and does find a way to the hearts of people, for it is a true witness like the witness of Christians in the first centuries.

We believe that the witness may "have favour with all the people" when it corresponds to their aims and expresses their hopes and expectations.

And we believe (and observe) that the Lord, for whom we truly witness "adds to their number day by day those who (are) being saved". And those who are thirsty are coming to us and are receiving the water of life (Rev. 22:17). And our church stands day by day — she keeps her guard night by night and sometimes we ask: "How long, O Lord, how long" and the Lord answers us: "Yes, I am coming to the longing hearts of my people"; and "the Spirit and the bride say, Come!" "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:17-20).

NOTES

[1] Cf. Pierre Deutin, *Quel christianisme pour demain?*, Paris, 1983, p.137.
[2] Jean Delameau, *Le christianisme va-t-il mourir?*, Paris, 1977.
[3] Cf. A. von Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, 4 Aufl., Leipzig, 1924, Bd. II, "Die Mission in Wort und Tat".
[4] Cf. Gerhard Kittel, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, Stuttgart, 1966, Vol. IV, pp.477-452.
[5] Cf. V.V. Bolotov, *Lectures on the History of the Ancient Church*, Vol. II, pp.2-9.
[6] Cf. Sibusico Bengu, *Mirror or Models. The Church in an Unjust World*, New York, 1984.
[7] Cf. Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, Boston, 1964; *L'homme uni-dimensional*, Paris, 1968.
[8] Cf. Jean Daniélou, *Sept problèmes capitaux de l'Eglise*, Paris 1969, p.19.
[9] Cf. J. Moltmann, *Faith-Conversations with Contemporary Theologians*, ed. by Theofilo Cabestrero, No. 4, 1977, pp.127-129.
[10] See also E. Schillerbeckx, *Christ. The Christian Experience in the Modern World*, London, 1980, pp.808-820.
[11] Cf. Yves Congar, *Un peuple Messianique — Salut et Libération*, Paris, 1975.
[12] *Ibid.*

Justice and Peace in the Orthodox Tradition

GEORGE DRAGAS

The Orthodox tradition

The Orthodox tradition is not ultimately a set of ideas, or a sort of religious world view. It is not a human religious construction or institution either. It is rather a concrete existence which brings together God and humanity or, more broadly, God and the cosmos. Strictly speaking, it is identical with Jesus Christ and his church — the church being understood here in terms of specific persons: the holy virgin Mother of Christ, the holy apostles, the holy fathers and the other saints, those in heaven and those on earth, the known and the unknown, the people of God. In other words, the Orthodox tradition is that living organism which is founded upon the Lord Jesus Christ and which has been growing through the ages, pressing towards its completion and the completion of the saving plan of the Holy Trinity for the world. This living organism has a normative character when compared with whatever exists outside or beside it. As such, it is the criterion of everything that exists; it is the measure for everything else but cannot be measured by any other standard. It is important to stress this normative existential understanding of the Orthodox tradition, lest one should fall into the endless and futile genealogies of abstract ideology, or into non-normative and unauthentic existence.

The term "Orthodox" denotes the normative character of the existential foundation of the Orthodox tradition. There is, however, another important aspect of this existence which is conveyed by the term "tradition". In its original meaning, embedded in the Greek term "paradosis", it denotes something which is given and received, as opposed to something which is created or constructed. In many modern usages the term "tradition" is used in a non-Orthodox sense, i.e., as a subjective construct. In the Orthodox perspective, however, tradition is the saving gift

of Christ to the world, received by the apostles and handed down through the fathers from generation to generation in the context of the present opportunity (*ho nun kairos*) which is the time between the events of Christ's first and last *parousia*. The Orthodox tradition, then, is the saving eschatological reality of Christ and his church which presents itself to the world not as something provisional and transient, but as something saving, complete, critical and final.

It is sad that in the contemporary ecumenical encounters between Orthodox and other Christians this critical realism of the Orthodox tradition is not always understood and what is often projected is an antiquarian, backward-looking, esoteric traditionalism, which appears to be inadequate for providing answers to contemporary problems and challenges. It must be confessed at this point that we Orthodox share to some extent the responsibility for such a misundertanding, inasmuch as our arguments from the points of view of the Orthodox tradition are often abstract and scholastic instead of being existential and patristic. However, as Orthodox church history teaches us in its presentation of the struggles between Orthodoxy and heresy, to argue or to discuss in the mode of a philosopher's hypotheses is to side with the heretics and to be deprived of concrete reference to the reality of the Orthodox tradition. On the contrary, to argue from the real perspective of the completed economy of salvation (i.e., from Christ and his church) the existential foundation of the Orthodox tradition is to follow the fathers and to promote real ecumenism. It must be stressed here that from the existential perspective of the Orthodox tradition any ecumenism which treats the reality of Christ and his church as secondary, theoretical, metaphorical or futuristic is utopian.

What can this existential approach to the Orthodox tradition, centred on Christ and his church, tell us about justice and peace?

Justice

We must affirm straight away that from the perspective of the Orthodox tradition justice cannot be adequately measured by merely human standards but only by the divine-human standard of Christ and his church. The Christological criterion finds its foundation in the union of the divine and the human in the One person of Christ and the revelation of its dynamic content in the deeds of compassion, mercy and love of God-become-man — which reach their climax in his agony in Gethsemane, his sufferings and crucifixion, his glorious resurrection and his ascension. The crucified and risen Christ is our justification. This unique event of the

just God becoming a just man among unjust human beings and condescending to suffer for their salvation unjustly at the hands of the unjust is the real foundation for understanding justice in the perspective of Orthodoxy. The ecclesiological scope of this criterion is quite impressive when one turns to the deeds of mercy, philanthropy and sharing and to the holy innocents and holy martyrs in the early Christian communities and in those of subsequent generations. The Orthodox Church has never ceased to produce suffering innocents and holy martyrs. Its experience in this is but a true imitation and participtiption in the reality of justice which has been concretely revealed in Christ, the God-man. The group of holy martyrs from Stephen, the first martyr, to the numerous Orthodox martyrs of this century and the group of benefactors of needy humanity from Saints Cosma and Damian to the Byzantine and modern philanthropists, all of whom are especially commemorated in the divine liturgy, is a constant reminder of the ecclesiological criterion of the Orthodox understanding of justice. We may recall here our Lord's words to the rich young ruler: "Go and give everything that you have to the poor": or his words to the disciples who wanted to sit on his right and on his left in his glory: "Can you drink the Cup which I drink and be baptised with the baptism with which I am being baptised?"

The implications of such an understanding of justice for many modern justice-issues are quite clear. There is no just war, no just violence, no just revenge or recompense, no just accumulation of wealth. Justice implies mercy and philanthropy, forgiveness and suffering, the way of the cross. The way of the cross is the way of self-giving in mercy and love, to the point of humiliation, penury, obloquy, deprivation, abandonment, exile and even martyrdom and death. But this death is the death of injustice and the resurrection to eternal life. In this way Christ's gift of justification is extended to humanity and to the world, as the powers of true redeeming and transforming justice are released. It is this justice of free grace, as contrasted with the justice of the law, that leads to real peace.

Peace

Peace in the Orthodox tradition is that which Christ gives and which reached its climax at the resurrection. It is a peace which presupposes unconditional self-giving in compassion and love. It is a peace which presupposes an offering, a sacrifice. The whole life of Christ and the saints is one of self-offering and sacrifice, of giving rather than receiving, of serving rather than being served. Since the greatest offering which

Christ made was that of his life upon the Cross for the sake of his fellow human beings, the peace which resulted from this was also the greatest. When after the resurrection he appeared to his holy disciples, the risen Christ greeted them and then blessed them with that "Peace be with you" which passed all their understanding. It was no mere greeting, for it was based on the fact of the resurrection, which irrevocably and finally produced the just outcome of the justice of his innocent suffering upon the cross. It was not easy for the disciples who had seen his passion to understand the nature of the resurrection. That is why the peace which the resurrection brought was beyond the grasp of their imagination. It was his peace, as contrasted with the peace of the world; a peace which was lasting, permanent, saving. But this is where we find the secret to the peace of the saints and the martyrs. They look to the peace of the resurrection as the real outcome of their innocent martyrdom, because of Christ. He went first as a forerunner and they followed him. Thus the church gives this peace in the celebrations of the saving death and resurrection of Christ and the falling asleep of the saints and martyrs.

Justice and Peace

It is clear that in the Orthodox tradition there is no peace without justice; also, that final and lasting peace follows a total and unconditional offering of mercy and love, even to the point of incurring innocent suffering and death. Indeed such offering, suffering and death lead in their turn to reconciliation, resurrection, eternal life. Just as the cross precedes the resurrection, or the resurrection follows the cross, so does the justice of unconditional offering and suffering precede the real establishment of peace, or the real establishment of peace follows the unconditional offering or sacrifice.

To realize the supreme significance of this Orthodox model of justice and peace, one needs to contrast it with the legal model which is based on provisional conventions. The legal model which is widely used in human society today is based on bargaining terms and conditions, which produce possible and provisional, but not ultimate, settlements. The reason is that such conditions do not alter the ultimate causes of injustice and strife which have become firmly established in human society; they are destitute of the force of love, freedom and grace — those divine powers upon which the creation and redemption of the world have been established. Referring to this legal justice as exemplified in the Judaism of his earthly career, Jesus Christ warned his disciples that they must strive to transcend it or exceed it. This is exactly where the Christian challenge to contempo-

rary quests for justice at the social, national and international levels, should be transcended by means of unconditional offerings on the part of the rich to the poor, of the strong to the weak, of the healthy to the sick. The Orthodox tradition points to this transfiguring pattern of justice and peace, which is neither hypothetical nor conventional, but firmly and eternally established on the divine human sacrament of Christ and his church. Orthodox monasticism reveals that the most perfect peace is gained by the most perfect *apotaxis*. That in turn creates a just and peaceful community. The Beatitudes give us the practical code for promoting justice and peace in the Orthodox perspective.

Towards a Eucharistic Ecology

K.M. GEORGE

There has been a proliferation of literature on ecological issues in recent years. The contribution of Christians to this debate has been motivated by several factors. One seems to be Christianity's sensitivity to the often-repeated accusation that Judeo-Christian biblical faith, especially the Genesis account of creation, is at the root of the modern ecological crisis. The accusation has been made that God's mandate to humans to fill the earth, to subdue it and have dominion over it (Gen. 1:26-8) was interpreted in a way that was convenient to greedy and selfish man. The major responsibility for the exploitation and desacralization of nature has been put on Western man and his privileged instruments, science and technology; and this criticism first arose from within western society itself. Some critics, like Theodore Roszak for instance, became romantic advocates of nature and the natural, indulging in rhapsodic exaltation of nature, and violently attacking the reductionism and the "single vision" of modern scientific-technological culture.[1] Many have turned to eastern religions and techniques of spirituality as an alternative to the Christianity of the West and the Western abuse of the physical environment. For many Afro-Asian thinkers the colonial expansion of the West, and the resultant Western mastery of the earth and its resources, were supreme examples of human greed, arrogance and the total insensitivity of the West towards God's gift of the good earth to all human beings. Endless discussions are going on concerning all these points. Our present purpose is not to go into such discussions and judge who is to be blamed or not. We recognize that our world is facing an ecological crisis and we are concerned mainly with shaping attitudes and finding ways and means in order to resolve the crisis and move towards a better and healthier life on earth.

The divine economy

The word "steward" is used in various different contexts in the New Testament. The Greek word is *oikonomos*, a manager or administrator of a house. He can be a manager of property and money as in Luke 12:41-48 and Matthew 24:45-51, or steward of the mysteries of God as in 1 Corinthians 4:1-2 or steward of God's varied grace as in 1 Peter 4:10. In every case the fundamental qualities of a good steward are trustworthiness, dependability and wisdom. *Oikonomos* comes from the word *oikos* which means "a house". The words "economy" and "ecology" are derived from this same root.

Economy, apart from our ordinary sense of the term, has a special meaning in traditional Christian theology. *Oikonomia* or Economy is the synonym of the incarnation of Christ.[2] The word is used, because in the incarnate Christ God has limited himself, become a human being and subjected himself to the laws of ordinary life on earth. This was a special way of God's "home management" in order to save the world. In this divine economy God accommodates himself to human conditions with the sole intention of saving humankind. All God's dealings with his creation are marked by this divine economy centred in the incarnate Christ. *Kenosis* or God's self-emptying for the salvation of the world is the central theme of the divine economy. Christ's self-offering on the cross was also the descent to the deepest layers of the human reality. In his offering the whole created order was offered to the Father. According to the Orthodox tradition in every eucharistic celebration we participate in the self-offering of Christ by offering ourselves and the whole creation to God the Father.

Now how do we relate this divine economy of incarnation for the salvation of the world to human ecological issues? The following points are offered to suggest a few possible links.

1. The concern of divine economy is with the whole of created reality and not simply with a part of it only. St John the Evangelist clearly indicated the universal dimension of Christ's creating, sustaining and saving activity in his conception of the Logos (John 1:1-12). St Paul also was passionately aware of the universality of the call of God given to all creation. "We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now" for the glorious liberty of the children of God (Rom. 8:22). Nothing in creation is left out from this divine vocation offered through the divine economy, because fundamentally "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein" (Ps. 24:1).

The Greek word to denote the earth and its fullness in the above passage is *oikoumene*. In classical Greek it meant "the whole inhabited earth". During the Roman imperial times *oikoumene* or the whole inhabited earth was confined to the Roman empire. *Pax Romana* and the rights and privileges of the Roman citizens were extended only to those who were within the oikoumene. The Greeks also had set the limits of their own oikoumene only to take in those who knew Greek language and culture. In modern times the Spanish, the Portuguese, the British, the French, the Americans, the Russians, have all created their own oikoumene in order to save some and leave out others. This attempt to reduce "the inhabited earth" to the limits of one's own petty interests and selfishness is operative in various degrees in all human activities including ideological positions, political options and theological interpretations. The ecological crisis is created partly by such reductionist, parochial world-views.

The perspective of divine economy as outlined earlier is wholly opposed to this. What we need is an ecological approach which conforms to the divine economy of infinite dimensions. Every time we propose "global perspectives", we should also at the same time ask how inclusively global our global perspectives are. God's creation in its totality is the *oikos*, the home where we humans live as children of the Father Creator. We responsibly manage this house not as paid servants but as sons and daughters, because the house belongs to God and to us together.

A living house

2. The word *oikos* (house) implies an organic relationship with the house. Generally speaking consanguinity is the common bond that links those who live in the same house. The human body is a house in this sense, a living house in which every member experiences and mutually expresses the organic relationship of blood-relatedness. Deep feelings of love, affection, care and a sense of belonging and identity arise from such relationship. No member can live outside the house of the body as there is no viable relationship outside it. Home-sickness is a terrible condition that every alienated member suffers from. Either the member should return to the vital relationship with the body or suffer anxiety, immobility and finally death. We see at the micro-level of sub-atomic reality that particles exist only as energy states in dynamic inter-relationships. If there is no relationship there is no particle, no matter. Any so-called solid, objective and independent piece of matter is a nexus of relationships. The material universe is constituted by an

infinitely dynamic in-house relationship of its so far known smallest units. It manifests the integral character of an organism, a living body.

At the macro-level of material reality this *oiko-somatic* or house-body paradigm is no less obvious to perceptive minds. The rich symbolism underlying the Pauline idea of the body of Christ includes it. Unfortunately the image of the body of Christ was to undergo either an extreme spiritualization or an inordinate reductionism. The body of Christ was understood as an exclusively spiritual reality unrelated to the body of the earth or material universe in certain classical theological ways of thought both in the East and the West. It was reduced to an insignificant figure of speech denoting the audience of the preacher or at best the *congregatio fidelium*, the congregation of the faithful, in the Reformation and Enlightenment phases of Western theology. The church as the body of Christ, the symbol and foretaste of the new creation, is an inclusive reality that embraces the whole creation. The totality of creation is the ultimate body that has to become the house of the Holy Spirit. If our physical bodies have the vocation of becoming the temple (house) of the Spirit, the physical universe too shares in that calling. Those early Latin theologians who said *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* defined too clearly the frontiers of the body-house. Noah's ark, which they took as the symbol of the church and the neat example of salvation for the few and condemnation for the many, was often misunderstood. The ark, in fact, preserved and did not destroy all life in the world, though a strong element of judgment was present. Judgment in this ark was a house of salvation where creation began anew. Every creature in the ark was a house of salvation where creation began anew. Every creature in the ark, clean or unclean, became part of the household of Noah, the *paterfamilias* and the head of the body. The disrupted body of creation was restored to a new unity within the body of the ark. As water receded from the earth, the members of the house within the body of the ark pushed the door wide open and spread far and wide to make the earth their new house and new body.

The strong individualism in some predominant but distorted forms of Christian spirituality always insisted on the body as "my body" and the Body of Christ as a collection of several "my body"s. We need to rediscover the successive layers of "my body", starting with my immediate body layer to the farthest layer of material creation. In this process of universal "in-corporation" I will find that "my body" and "your body" are mutually incorporated and integrated towards the experience of one single body. Taking the eucharistic bread in his hand, Christ said: "This is my body." In the Christian tradition, the eucharistic

bread always symbolizes the universe, the whole created order. Entering the temple, Christ called it "My Father's house" and denounced those who made it a den of robbers. In all ancient religions the temple, the sacred space, is the symbol of the universe. Christian faith, though no longer quite aware of its own ancient roots, has to call the material creation "my father's house". For Christians too have been for long greedy merchants, unscrupulous money changers and robbers sharing the loot within the sacred precincts of the temple of creation without realizing that they are on holy ground. Christian theology can explore the highly sacramental *oiko-somatic* paradigm for the perception and transformation of reality in a new way.

Host and guest at once

3. The old virtue of hospitality has been given a very prominent position in the Christian ethical system ever since the time of the Apostles. The New Testament writers were unanimous about the vital role the practice of hospitality played in constituting God's household, the body of Christ. *Philoxenia*, literally love of strangers (hospitality), appears on a par with words like *philanthropia* and *philadelphia*.

Later, monastic spirituality took up the idea of hospitality and this virtue became one of the chief marks of a true monk or of a monstic community. The tradition is maintained until today in many monastic communities. This Christian hospitality is quite different from our social practice of receiving and entertaining guests, usually of more or less the same social status as the host, in our homes. The monks received almost anybody who came to them without questioning or asking for credentials. Monastic history is full of stories of true hospitality which was extended not only to human beings but also to beasts and birds as well. We have living examples of saints in our time who are friendly and hospitable not only to the diseased and the disabled, to the destitute and disinherited, to the freeloader and the imposter but also to wandering dogs and stray cats and all that is created by God. Here hospitality assumes cosmic dimensions. The true saint receives the whole creation as one's own household. Nothing is really alien or hostile to one in God's creation. It is God's mercy and love that penetrate creation through the saint's empathetic understanding and the loving, reconciling embrace of the "stranger". Father Zosima's sense of hospitality in Dostoevsky's "The Brothers Karamazov" transfigures those who come to him.

The alienation that happened between the human ego and the rest of creation, which is at the root of our ecological crisis, is dissolved by this

cosmic hospitality. The stranger is accepted as one's own blood brother/sister. The broken body of creation is healed and restored. A new community where there is no alienation between humans and humans or between humans and the rest of creation arises. Adam the stranger and wanderer in an inhospitable world outside paradise is given a new home, made a member of a new household through the self-offering hospitality of the incarnate Christ.

Hospitality, far from being understood simply as part of social custom, has great theological significance in developing a eucharistic ecology for our times. Unreserved self-offering is basic to true hospitality and genuine receiving. We offer the creation as a thank-offering (*eucharistia*) to God in liturgy. In the Orthodox liturgy we say that Christ is the guest and the host, the receiver and the received, the offering and the offerer in the eucharistic act. In several languages of the world there is only one root word for both guest and host. We, the bearers of God's image, play at the same time the roles of guest and host to creation. We offer ourselves to God's creation as the host of creation.

We are received by the creation as its guests. There is another simultaneous offering and receiving. We offer ourselves and the whole creation to God the Creator in Christ. We receive back the material creation as a gift sanctified by the presence of the living body and blood of the Son of God in the midst of it.

A reorientation of the Christian attitude to nature along these lines can recapture some of the sacramental elements in our understanding of creation which we lost in the process of rationalizing and intellectualizing our Christian faith.

Communion

4. The economy in Christ is motivated by God's "Philanthropia", love of humankind. Its sole purpose is the salvation of the world. Salvation here is not understood simply as the soul's salvation, but as the cosmic process by which God creates, sustains and brings the creation to perfection (*teleiosis*) through the Holy Spirit. In order to achieve this, God became man in Christ and gets into the stream of life in the universe. God enters into total communion with his creation. God is no longer "up there" and man "down here". God does not treat human beings as objects to be "used" for his purpose or to be saved. God shares the human condition in all its depth and breadth. Christ assumed human nature in order to transfigure it "from glory to glory" as St Paul reminds us. Christ envisaged his own oneness with the Father as the model and foretaste of

the unity of all humanity and nature with the Trinity (John 17:21). The divine economy's hallmark is this experience of communion between God and his creation.

Our modern scientific-technological culture is rooted in the subject-object distinction and separation. Scientific objectivity would consider "communion" a bizarre synonym of confusion and lack of clarity and rigour. This impelled the famous Jewish thinker Martin Buber, among others, to remind us strongly of the I-Thou dialogical relationship between man and his environment. Buber lamented the modern scientific attempt to reduce everything — persons, animals, trees and things alike — to "it". Everything and everybody apart from my ego are my objects to be used by me. My relation to the external world is defined by the "I — it" relationship. Instrumentalism is the curse of our age.

Participation

5. Participation is a key word in the Orthodox understanding of the ultimate vocation of created reality. Creation is called to share in the life and glory of the Creator. Patristic tradition makes a distinction btween the *ousia* (essential being of God) and the *energeia* (operations of God in creation). While the three Persons of the Trinity participate in the *ousia* of God, we participate in the *energeia* of God. "What we can participate in is the being, life and goodness of God as it is given to us in God's *energeia* which has brought us into being, sustains us in life and leads us in the good. All three belong to the nature of man, and the whole of the nature of human kind is God's gift. Nature is grace."[3]

The call to participation in God is extended to nature through human beings. As all creation suffered from the human fall, so the return and restoration of creation are also through human liberation and participation in God's life. Humanity has been given a mediatory role between God and nature by the very nature of human constitution as a union of material and spiritual elements. Humanity is understood in Eastern Patristic thought as a "frontier being", a mediator between different aspects of reality.'[4]

This is decisive for the human approach to the world and the creation in general. Creation is not just an object for human greed, to be dominated, possessed and exploited. Rather, a reverential attitude is called for. We have to work in co-operation with nature towards the realization of our call in Christ.

Transfiguration is the word often used in the Orthodox tradition for preparing the creation for the ultimate experience of glory. Our worship, our prayers, our life that expresses truth and goodness, our efforts to bring justice and peace on earth — all contribute to the process of transfiguration. The venerable tradition of iconography in the Byzantine Orthodox Churches always portrays saintly persons not in a realistically natural setting using the canons of pictorial art as developed in Renaissance Europe, but in a new light and a new angle that manifest the life to come. Peace and harmony with the totality of creation are the essential features of Orthodox sacred art. L. Ouspensky, versed in the theology of icons, says about the portrayal of the saint:

> The world surrounding man — the bearer and announcer of the divine revelation — becomes an image of the world to come, transfigured and renewed. Everything loses its usual aspect of disorder, everything acquires a harmonious order — human, landscape, animals and architecture. Everything which surrounds the saint yields with him into a rhythmic order. Everything reflects the divine presence and is drawn — and draws us also — towards God.[5]

Mastery and mystery

6. The German theologian Jürgen Moltmann points out the contrast between the traditional understanding of knowledge as communion and the modern understanding of knowledge as "grasping", touching, possessing, conquering and colonizing".[6] He refers to the etymological connection between the German words *kennen* (to know) and *können* (to be able to do something). Knowing here means "know-how", and understanding means how to do something. Divine economy as communion-participation has been replaced by possession-domination in the human economy. Knowledge as communion does not exclude our scientific-technological and political-economic attempts to understand and continually construct our reality. But they need to be reoriented radically in order to evolve a sane and holistic attitude to life and nature.

Paulos Gregorios qualifies the two conflicting poles of our civilization as "mastery" and "mystery". "Both these masteries — the technological mastery of physical reality and the psychic mastery of spiritual power — cannot heal us. We need to balance these masteries with an awareness and participation in the underlying mystery of God and his universe, and the related mystery of Christ in us, the hope of glory".[7]

The task of the church

7. The divine economy has created the community of believers or the body of Christ. The *oikonomos* or steward has to exercise his talents in this community: "As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace" (I Peter 4:10). The church as body of Christ is created not for its own sake. The church is like the ferment in the dough. It is placed within the created reality. The church's task is to transfigure the whole creation so that all that is created is restored from its distortions and made the body of Christ. The material creation is called back through Christ the God-Man to the original transparency, the capacity to receive and reflect the glory of God. Infants and saints are at peace even with wild animals, because they share that primordial innocence and transparency which help them behold the organic unity, coherence and love manifested by God's creation .This was the original harmony that was in paradise. After the Fall, Adam and Eve accuse each other and the first couple is at the point of a divorce. The interpersonal conflict thus started was consummated when Cain killed his brother. The Stoics spoke of *sympnoia* (conspiration or breathing with the cosmos) and *sympatheia* (experiencing the universe as an integral whole). These ideas were taken in by perceptive Christian thinkers on the basis of the idea of the body of Christ.

Our modern ecological crisis is the result of the old divorce between Adam and Eve, which has been haunting us throughout history, especially in modern times. A sane ecology has to perceive the meaning of the body of Christ as created by the divine economy in Christ.

Sharing in Christ's priesthood

8. The divine economy's *modus operandi* was suffering, self-offering and saving. Christ went through the deepest experience of suffering, gave himself upon the cross as the lamb of God slain for the world, rose from the dead and lifted up the whole creation to the presence of God the Father. In the eucharist (which means "thanksgiving") we offer bread and wine, the fruits of human labour, to the eternal Father through Christ. Bread and wine symbolize the whole material creation, the same creation assumed by Christ the God-Man. In this eucharistic offering God's creation is lifted up in its totality to the presence of God. We receive back the Body and Blood of Christ. Again we offer ourselves and the creation. Again we receive back the gift of God. This is the "eucharistic cycle". The creation is continually transfigured through this offering-receiving cycle. This is the offering of love and the receiving of love and the

becoming of love. This eucharistic cycle incorporates the rhythm of the cosmic body in its mutual self-giving, inter-connection and mutual embrace among the various members of the body. A sane ecology should be a eucharistic ecology.

The true steward offers himself up for the total life of that which is entrusted to him. He is not simply a custodian. He is the priest of creation. Christ is our high priest in whose priesthood we all share. We, as priests and stewards, stand in the presence of God on behalf of the whole creation lifting it up continually to the source of its being.

The Baconian dictum *scientia est potestas* (knowledge is power) and the Cartesian definition of man's destiny to become the *maître et possesseur de la nature* (master and owner of nature) have deeply influenced the development of our scientific-technological culture. But we are badly in need of trustworthy stewards, good priests and good shepherds who will offer their lives for the creation, who will discern the image of God in all human beings, and in every part of creation. Teilhard de Chardin, in the course of a scientific expedition, was once wandering in the Ordos desert on the day of the feast of the Transfiguration of Christ. He earnestly desired to offer mass, but could not. He had no proper elements or setting. In a rare moment of spiritual perception he became aware of the true meaning of the eucharist.[8]

> I have neither bread nor wine, nor altar. I will raise myself beyond these symbols up to the pure majesty of the real itself. I, your priest, will make the whole earth my altar and on it will offer you all the labours and sufferings of the world...All the things in the world to which this day will bring increase, all those that will diminish; all those too that will die, all of them, Lord, I try to gather into my arms, so as to hold them out to you in offering...This is the material of my sacrifice; the only material you desire.[8]

Such poetic-mystical vision may not occur to everybody; but it shows the priestly vocation of humanity to offer the whole universe as a thank-offering to God. It seems that very often doctrinal discussions by theologians do not sufficiently explore this cosmic dimension of the self-offering of Christ except perhaps repeating the formula "Christ died for all". Christ's death and resurrection, and the participation of the Church in those saving events through the celebration of the eucharist, carry deep significance for the life of the universe which is our house (*oikos*) and our body (*soma*). An eucharistic ecology has the vision of the transfiguration of this cosmic house as the "house of the Father" and this cosmic body as the body of Christ.

NOTES

[1] Theodore Roszak, *Where the Wasteland Ends*, New York, Anchor Books, 1973, p.99.
[2] G.L. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought*, London, SPCK, 1952, p.67.
[3] Paulos Gregorios, *Cosmic Man*, New Delhi, Sophia Publications, 1980, p.128.
[4] Paulos Gregorios, "Mastery and Mystery: Spirituality within Humanity's Mediating Role", in *The Way Out*, October 1986, pp.312-329.
[5] L. Ouspensky, *Theology at the Icon*, New York, 1978, p.220.
[6] J. Moltmann, *Experience of God*, London, SCM Press, 1980, p.59.
[7] Paulos Gregorios, *op.cit.*, p.327.
[8] T. de Chardin, *Hymn of the Universe*.

An Ethical Approach to Justice and Peace

VASSILIOS GIULTSIS

Dogma and the ethical approach

When the Orthodox speak of the spiritual signs, qualities and virtues that reveal the moral attitude of the faithful, they take for granted their dependence on dogma. They base this view on the profound and direct internal relationship between dogma and ethics, i.e. the unity of faith and life.

The patristic writings speak of this way of life in terms that embrace both faith and life, as in such expressions as: "to behave in accordance with the Spirit", "to follow the light", "to live in accordance with God's will or the Spirit of Christ", or "to live in Christ."[1]

Justice and peace, being ethical manifestations, represent at the same time a sharing, in the experience of the faith, of the special features of the transfigured human person. It is evident that the idea of dogma in our tradition is in no way a theoretical concept supposedly evolving over history into a "system of faith". On the contrary, it is the road to the reality of the "new life", i.e. the life revealed to the world by the church of "the folly of the Cross", of the resurrection paradox, of "tears" and of the "eschatological expectation". In so describing itself, the church repeatedly emphasizes the inhospitable and impermanent character of this world. One of the positive elements in Eastern apophatism should perhaps be mentioned here. As is well known, this apophatism has helped to protect Orthodoxy; it enabled it to some extent to avoid the temptation of social institutionalization (secularization, for example, and worldly power) at the time when Western Christianity under the influence of scholasticism attributed an absolute character to spiritual experience by recognizing in it an abstract intellectual form, the ecclesiological consequences of which are well known. In this form, dogma parts company with actual experience and becomes a topic for theological discussion, an object of study by theolo-

gians and specialists; it ultimately deals with truths and viewpoints that are difficult if not impossible for the faithful to tackle.

Apophatism and the subconscious distrust of the Easterners for rationalist preoccupations have favoured, cultivated and preserved the mystical character of the theology experienced in full and in every detail of church life. Dogma is not merely the living teaching of the church and the witness of the Fathers and church writers of all epochs; it has been expressed also in the liturgical texts and hymnology, in the synaxaries and lives of the saints, in the icons and church decoration, in mercy and Christian charity, in the Orthodox missions and in the "sufferings for Christ".

It is in this experience of dogma — at one and the same time practical, initiatory and mystical — that Orthodoxy's ethical attitude lies, faith and piety, theology and life constituting an indissoluble unity in which the virtues are experienced as "fruits of the Spirit". From this angle, the virtues are a living witness to the true interpretation of the dogma, and reveal the degree of inner change of the faithful.

This being the case, it is clear that the actual experience of justice and peace does not lie in mere acceptance of social rules designed to secure the order of society; it is much more a question of an inner approach in the mode of sanctification and uplifting of the human person[2] upon which any social, political or cultural change depends. That is why personal salvation is inconceivable without reconciliation, peace-making, exchange and the restoration of the individual church member's relation with himself or herself (conscience), with others (the neighbour) and with the Father in heaven (God in Trinity).

The justice and peace of the "creation in the image"

The foregoing clearly shows that the basic content of the concepts "justice" and "peace" (as of course of any virtue) is understandable only in relation to the purpose of the creation of humanity and the universe. Their true sense must therefore be sought in the theological presuppositions leading to the creation "in the image of God".[3] There is also a first distinction to be made: when we speak of creation in the image of God, we refer back to concepts prior to the Fall (*justicia et pax originalis*), which is to be distinguished from the situation after the Fall when the denatured concepts are now mere substitutes (*justicia et pax socialis*) that cannot be related to the purpose of the creation.

The true content of the term "justice" is evident, for example, in the text where St Paul speaks of putting on "the new nature, created after the

likeness of God in true righteousness" (Eph. 4:24). It is clear in this passage that justice is directly linked to the creation — "after the likeness" — and it is this likeness that is to make a return possible to the creation "after the likeness". It goes without saying that justice is closely linked to "free will" and that the fact of living is seen as a free movement of humanity on the way to the meeting and communion with God.

This shows that the spiritual qualities of creation "in the likeness" are dynamic in character, making human existence progress in the direction of the social approach and dialogue. Hence, it is in the practice of the virtues that the true revolution of the human person takes place as it emerges from the static, antisocial limitations of egocentric nature. In a state of sin (on the other hand) there is a persistence and inertia in an individualistic, instinctive biological state. That is why the Orthodox tradition sees in the expression "in the likeness" a parallel experience of love, knowledge of God, infallibility, innocence, sincere sociability, absence of passions, saintliness, incorruptibility and absence of grief.[4] The text shows that justice provides a broader frame in which the gifts of "creation in the likeness" are visible since man becomes "himself/herself"[5] in company with all others[6] and in communion with the Father.[7]

* * *

The same happens with the concept of "peace". Nearly all the passages in the Old Testament relating to peace equate it with felicity, harmonious relations and (especially) the happiness that follows the elimination of confusion, discord and evil in all its forms. The good wishes, such as "Peace be with you" and "Go in peace", that we find so often in the Book of Judges[8] from where they reached the New Testament and the liturgical texts of the church, make peace an inner spiritual quality, a divine gift and a mark of God's goodwill towards "his people and his faithful".[9]

That is to say, peace must be referred directly to God upon whom it depends. In the mind of the faithful, peace without God or far from God is inconceivable, and even if it existed it would only be an imitation and without effect. In the texts, e.g. those of the Prophets, peace is the central concept of the messianic age, the time when all anti-social destructive consequences of the Fall will be remedied, not only on the plane of human inter-relations but also on the global plane of the creation.[10] And it is precisely for this reason that the Messiah is announced as "the prince of peace"[11] and that the eschatological period of his triumph is linked to the

absolute rule of justice and peace: "In his days may righteousness flourish and peace abound" (Ps. 72:7).[12]

The messianic content of peace is equally striking in the New Testament, where the message of salvation is revealed as "the gospel of peace".[13] The new reality introduced by the incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ is in itself peace; this is because it abolishes "the wall of separation and hate" so that the "sonship" of human beings in relation to God, broken by the Fall, and the "brotherhood" uniting humanity are restored. In the well-known passage in the Epistle to the Galatians (5:22) peace is one of the major virtues that are "fruits of the Spirit". As such, it is the result of the inner combat of the faithful for cleansing, perfecting and salvation. Peace is thus a way of return to the creation "in the image" and hence a precondition for the raising of the creation "to the likeness".

Meaning of "person"

These approaches lead to a series of data on the position of Orthodoxy vis-à-vis the concept of the "human person" from which its responsibility for all humanity is defined. It is necessary therefore to pause for a moment to consider the term "person" with a view to seeing how the tradition of Orthodoxy has interpreted its meaning and content. Naturally, the term has always been understood within the framework of the creation "in the likeness of God" and it expresses the dynamism of the faithful transfigured "in Christ".

As opposed to the biological individual, the "person" is the hypostasis in movement towards a communication (communion) with the other beings in the human society and with God in person. Hence in the term "person" we must see the relation as a possibility of communion. This relation reveals the active movement of the person out of his or her existence with a view to a meeting with his or her fellow creatures. This movement in its sociological sense is the "expression and role" of the person, and at the same time it reveals the existence in the person of a "social dynamism". This term is not to be taken as a biological "naturalist" necessity that as such should belong to the natural tendencies of the individual, but as a religious and psycho-spiritual function that remains the principal element of the personality.[14]

Although it is possible for the "individual" to isolate himself or herself, he or she is part of the species and subject to determinism from birth to death. A "person" on the other hand is created by God as an absolute value in eternity and as a unity of spiritual elements, a real hypostasis and

image of God in man. Consequently, in the human person we can uncover a totality in miniature, a plenitude in miniature analogous to the plenitude of the world, a perfect microcosm[15] which, through the image of God in it, becomes the "*link of all nature*".[16]

As we have said earlier, the person in the Orthodox Tradition is something different from the static, biological individual, something opposite to the subjective ego. So we can say that it is the individual in motion towards another individual in motion; and that it is in this movement that the two tend to become members of the Lord's society in the Holy Spirit and, at the same time, persons.[17]

The term "person" cannot, however, be used in Orthodox theology in a "humanitarian, romantic or idealist sense designating a subject with its own personality based on the fact that it is different from all others. In the Orthodox tradition, the person is to be construed as a personal being solely defined by its relation to other members of the ecclesial community. To be personal means that one's individuality arises only out of the reciprocal movement of love, which leads to the interdependence in Christ of the human beings gathered by the Paraclete."[18]

For the Church Fathers — as also for contemporary theologians — the person is determined solely on the basis of his or her horizontal relation to his or her neighbour, and after conscious incorporation in the Holy Spirit in the mystical body.[19] Thus the mystical body becomes the area of grace, in the sense of the confraternity of human beings.

This is how we should understand the content and dynamism, and also the mission, of a person in the "world". True, in its new perspective inaugurated by the Word, this world is the eschatological flock of the "sole Shepherd". The "hero" of this flock is now the Paraclete who transfigures each human being personally and the world into the church. The person constitutes an expression of reference to the creation "in the image", and the church constitutes a frame for the cultivation of virtues with the essential content of offering, sacrifice and love, as is likewise needed for justice and peace.

The Fall and falling away from justice and peace

The presuppositions that we have made for defining the original content of justice and peace must be assessed in the light of the reality brought into the world by the tragedy of the Fall.

We have already noted that, in their primitive form, the two concepts imply above all a dynamic inter-personal relation at the level of the communion between God and man before the Fall, that has a corre-

sponding relation in the inter-human domain. This being so, the concepts of justice and peace are experienced in their absolute form with disinterested love as their principal characteristic, i.e. offering and relationship without hope of any return. To expect a reward is to show individualistic leanings that were absolutely unknown before the Fall. The temptation by Satan that led to the Fall gave rise in humanity to the feeling of love for one's own person; it provoked the rise of individualism; it created the illusion of self-sufficiency and power; it broke the link of justice and this resulted in a rupture of man's relations with God and neighbour, i.e. a simultaneous disappearance also of peace.

Thereafter, what a pattern of human disorganization is set up: suffering, hatred, fratricidal wars, racial hostility, difficulties at work — all the result of a lack of fraternity, of oppressive egoism. Eventually, it is opposition to God and the will to be god oneself which is the cause of all the evils. With this breach with God the Father and lack of faith in his life-giving goodness, humanity falls into despair, hatred, injustice and (naturally) suffering.

The whole of the Old Testament witnesses to this. Original sin, the cause of all evils, produces this estrangement from Yahweh. And the whole vista of the coming of Jesus is contained in the beginning of Genesis: "In the roll of the Book it is written of me".[20] Jesus Christ brings the good news of our divineness in him, restores the faith in the Father and gives back peace and justice, and with these the hope of eternal life which gives real life once more to humanity and makes it really like God.

In the Orthodox tradition, the sense of sin — even after the restoration of the broken divine-human communion due to the incarnation of the Logos — is explained by considering sin as a force that destroys social relations. This is easy to understand within the visible community of the church, regarded as a new reality in Christ thanks to the action of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, it is only within the church that one can realize the dimensions and consequences of sin, since it is within the church that the notion of "neighbour" has its full meaning, and it is also within the church that sin is characterized as a violation of relations with one's neighbour.[21]

The new society in Christ whose members are called the "children of God" and the "Lord's brethren" represents in the Holy Spirit a family in which sin against one's neighbour and against God simultaneously reveals the revolt against one's brother or sister and against the Father, and also an intention to interrupt communion with them. Hence it is the cause of the destruction of relations between God and humanity. This destructive force is what causes a breakdown in social relations on the

human level and also the God-human level. It is the anti-social factor which by the Fall has crept into the rational creation and becomes at the same time one of the factors destroying the material creation. Here we find the true cause of the ecological problem.

I need not recapitulate the biological consequences of the Fall since it is well known that the Fall creates a weakness leading to disease and hence to death. In a universe of evil and under threat of death humanity is forced to enter the fight to overcome material and theoretical conditions so as (hopefully) to keep itself alive. Lack of these "goods " and conditions is reflected in anguish, fear and insecurity, while an assurance of being able to enjoy them is regarded as a form of security and happiness. In both cases, what prevails is an exaggerated individualism urging people constantly to acquire not only the necessities but (through insecurity) what is superfluous and excessive. To acquire unnecessary goods means, however, depriving others of what is necessary for them, so creating injustice and inevitably hatred.

Injustice (absence of justice) and hate (absence of peace) thus represent direct consequences of the Fall. On this point the church points out that the Fall has debased and tarnished the creation "in the likeness", hence the debasement and denaturing of justice and peace. While these represented possibilities for true *rapprochement* between God and humanity and between individuals, justice and peace have been restricted to conventional social demands of a passing and fragmentary character. These concepts have become debased but it is certain that since the Fall humanity has continually longed for them. Hence the appearance of demands for true justice and peace that naturally lead nowhere. What lies behind these demands is certainly a nostalgia for the ideal but, since they are directed to relativized forms of the ideal that are only substitutes, they can only have recourse to means that are equally relative in striving for them.

The spiritual qualities given to humanity by God to bring it to *theosis* (divinization) have shrunk to biological, economic, institutional or sentimental demands, having become the vision of an entirely human "intersocial preoccupation" — generally understood in the social sciences as humanity's trend towards applying social justice and peace as widely as possible and to the greatest number possible.

This "intersocial" dream has been at the heart of human hopes from the remotest past and it is natural that it has maintained a nostalgia for a remote, perfect society. Very early, human happiness lay in an imaginary world where love, justice and peace reigned. It is evident that the longing for

justice and peace never ceased. The hope for an ideal world was soon translated into philosophical reasoning and thence to political philosophy with the dream of a perfect political system for which each proponent prescribed a different form, elements and pattern. This gave rise to the "social utopias", imaginary patterns of perfection that might take shape in theory but which were impossible to achieve in this world as long as humanity and the universe insist on remaining in the condition after the Fall.

Universal justice and peace

The foregoing leads to a painful conclusion, which itself raises a host of contradictions and questions. In addition to God's justice and peace spread and experienced as a mode of relations in the spiritual and social perspective of the church, the Fall and its consequences led to the birth of a worldly justice and peace with completely different content and aims. This justice and this peace usually take the form of social demands that are imposed by laws (legal violence), diplomacy (veiled politics), military supremacy (pride of power), third-party intervention (in case of military stalemate), etc.

In all these cases, justice and peace are simply an interlude, a truce, an effort to relieve those most affected, an utopian humanism without love, a pause in the midst of wars and injustices. The reason is that the modern world remains firmly attached to the same ideological bases as the earlier expansionisms. In spite of all the pacifist mobilization the old Latin adage: *Si vis pacem, para bellum* (if you wish for peace, prepare for war) retains its absolute and dogmatic character. This conception inevitably leads to a sociological (but also political) approach in which peace is viewed only in relation to war and justice in relation to injustice. We have gradually come to accept war and injustice as "natural" states of human society, and consequently a necessary evil.

This is what underlies the weakness of the different pacifist, socializing or humanitarian movements today. Their efforts are directed exclusively against war and power. They firmly condemn war, injustice, racial discrimination, inequalities, violations of human rights. They attack those negative realities as if they were inevitable and seem unconsciously not to believe in peace, justice, love, equality, fraternity, liberty as "natural" states for humanity and the world. Within these movements the peace-making point of view is almost always ignored and often the moving initiatives quickly reveal an ephemeral ideological-sentimental tendency or a political commitment or a futile attempt to attract attention and impress society.

Moreover, the existence of such movements — with their various socio-political links that merely reveal unsurmountable human divisions and reinforce the practice of ideological cleavages — cannot ensure the establishment of true justice and peace on a durable basis. In the present age of universality and internationalism, these movements only affect the surface of the macro-social problems; they simply envisage peace and justice as desires common to all humanity and more urgent at present.

Behind this evaluation, one perceives a "syncretistic ethic" which, like all products of syncretism, is purely deontological and addressed to people of good will — who too often show more ill will than good will. By urging human beings from a deontological point of view, the nature of liberty is relativized; and, regardless of the result, it appears negative from the moral point of view. Hence, a contradiction that eventually leads to no result, since the demand for justice and peace does not come from human concern for one's neighbour, but from the demands of a commitment that looks for macro-social results.

A commitment of this kind does not permit justice and peace to be viewed as qualities of the human being transfigured by God's grace, as fruits of the Spirit offered to humanity when it frees itself from the stifling constraints of individualism. Such a commitment pays no attention to the remarkable faculties of human nature "created in the image of God". This is what makes the difference between the world's justice and peace and that which the church proclaims and experiences as Body of Christ, with the dynamic inter-personal unity of the communion of saints.[22]

God's justice and peace

The distinction made above is not a mere rhetorical device. It is expressed by Jesus himself when he admonished and comforted his disciples during his last night on earth. In the text in question (John 14:27) the Lord clearly states: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you."

The peace of Christ and his justice are not concepts or rules within an abstract ideological framework addressed to the crowds and intended to make converts. Even less are they objectives inscribed in some moral code, and to be imposed at all cost. They are truths derived from the very essence of the divinity, attributes-qualities of God; that is why they are also attributes-qualities of the creation "in the image".

In Christian literature there are two very significant texts in which, in line with the well-known theological pattern of identifying the attribute with the person, God is directly linked to peace and justice. In the first of

these texts (Eph. 2:14-15) the apostle Paul, referring to the person of Christ, writes: "For he is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility...in his flesh." The second text, "Of God's Names", attributed to St Dionysius the Areopagite, stresses: "God is justice, for we praise him for giving to each what corresponds to his value, and for dispensing just measure, beauty and moderation."[23]

In the first text, Christ himself is the peace that unifies divided humanity in his own body, i.e. the church; the cause of the divisions, "the wall of enmity", is abolished. Christ as peacemaker conquers, by his death on the cross, all hostility that is the reason for the absence of peace. The death on the Cross, as an absolute expression of God's divine love, is at the same time the dynamic mystery of that peace which reconciles humanity to its heavenly Father. This is why the church describes the cross as the victory over death and hatred, "arm of peace, invincible trophy".

One can well imagine the notion of sin as long as one is a member of the church and if one makes efforts to combat egocentric individualism. This is one of the basic elements of Orthodox ecclesiology. Within the "new society" the faithful must become active members of this society in Christ through the Holy Spirit, when they have succeeded in abandoning the anti-social situation of an individual for the social situation of a person or (better) "personal being" i.e. of Christ born anew who lives with others and for others.

In the second text, the author of the Areopagite writings identifies justice with God because he sees in God the absolute and ideal use, distribution and development of justice. All this network of relations clearly shows that the notion of justice for the Christian conscience does not simply remain at the level of a virtue or a value, but that it has risen to the level of a divine quality which nourishes in "just measure, beauty and moderation" all aspects of the creation, notably the human image.

The linkage of the notions of justice and peace with the divinity has another consequence of particular interest for Christian ethics. While recognizing the createdness of humanity, the Orthodox tradition has proposed as a means of ascesis and way to perfection for the faithful, not only the imitation of the saints and the blessed, but also that of the divine persons in the Godhead. The imitation of the Godhead is not a sacriligious plan to assimilate the human being with God; it is rather a matter of caring for one's neighbour as a result of a moral attitude analogous to God's.[24] This analogy, the justification of which is found in the concept of

"creation in the likeness of God", does not envisage imitation of God's justice and peace as an ethical manifestation or action. It sees it rather as a universal reference for humanity which, enjoying the gifts given by God, tries to imitate God the Father by even clumsy signs as a child does for its physical father. By its simplicity, the universal reference to God makes human beings the recipient of divine grace; and it eventually acquires a "moral attitude consistent with that of God",[25] enters "into communion with God's nature" and finally approaches "divinization".

"Divinization" relates to the possibility for human beings to return to the communion with God before the Fall and recover the true nature of a creature "in the likeness of God" in order to strengthen relations with his or her fellow humans at all levels of social life. Divinization refers here to the perfection of the whole person and cannot be considered apart from a deep change from being an individual to a "person". According to Photius the Great, perfection as part of divinization is a happy result of creation "in the likeness of God", and that is why human beings are distinct from the whole creation. Hence, the human being through reason, free will, mastery and royal power assumes a relationship with the angels.[26]

Divinization is also — for the faithful reborn in Christ — a dynamic intra-personal movement directed at an ultimate goal on the eschatological plane "so that they may all be one"[27] and not an affirmation of the divinization that is a general consequence of the incarnation. Divinization is the possibility for human beings to act in the world as a new creation, and this — through faith, hope and charity — renews what is corrupt. Involved in the things of the world, human beings fight to be free from its influence so as to be able to share in the Holy Spirit thanks to the divinizing grace of Christ, and to be able to live in communion with the uncreated forces of the Godhead. That is why the Orthordox Chruch has very clearly described divinization as the result of a continual perfecting of the faithful.

This is shown above all by the fathers of the Church and the hesychasts (particularly those of Mount Athos) who combine a separation from the world with a life in the world. The separation shows the intention of being delivered from its influence, while the life in the world shows that the church is recognized as the world's centre. Failure to appreciate the world signifies absence from the visible church which, according to St. Gregory Palmas, is the only "community for divinization".[28] In this way, divinization can become a reality, for the lay as for the cleric or monk, a reality in church and in a continuous relationship with her and by the sacraments given by her. The monk's flight from the world must be seen as a means

of better communiction with God in favour of the world and humanity. This communication through prayer and sacramental life needs tranquillity, serenity, retirement, peace and above all justice as a form of relations with the brethren and God. Hence, the monastic flight seeks remoteness from the noise of the world but not from the world's problems and anxieties. The flight is a sacrifice. And there is no sacrifice higher than that of the subjective "I" in favour of a diaconate of the world. Such is the sacrifice made by the monk who has of course destroyed his own "I" in prayer, living anonymously as a result of his free will and decision.

This last point clearly shows that the imitation of "God's ethic" is situated at the meeting-point of human liberty and will, on the one hand, and of divine grace, on the other. This meeting sheds light from the Holy Spirit on to human existence, changes its qualities into qualities "resembling God" (*theoeideis*) and makes man a citizen of the kingdom of God sharing the fruits of the Spirit. There is no longer a fragmentary approach to the virtues but a complete one. The believer enjoys the gifts of God, loves, is patient, hopes, endures. It is impossible for the believer to neglect or undervalue any virtue, and that is why he or she is both just and peaceable, for "the harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace".[29]

Orthodoxy's responsibility

All this demonstrates Orthodoxy's high responsibility in relation to peacemaking initiatives in the modern world. These are not conceivable, of course, in terms of pacifist or socializing movements derived from various socio-political theories. What is lacking in these movements, as has already been mentioned, is the concern for the ontological renewal of the human person. This is the reason for their inability to tackle enmity, mistrust and division between human beings.

Orthodoxy has been proclaiming through the ages the power of the "folly of the Cross" — which seems absurd to the world — this force that overcomes the logic of the Fall and sin and offers humanity "weapons of light". This indicates the importance attached by our church to humanity's need to free itself from sin, the main cause of injustice (absence of justice) and hostility (absence of peace). Victory over sin is a progress in virtue. And this progress in virtue is a way of adopting justice and peace. Hence, only those who live in justice and peace are able to transmit them to others.

The Orthodox tradition has on the basis of the gospel proclaimed the brotherhood uniting humanity. It has broken down the obstacles erected

between human beings by social, political, ethnic and racial discriminations; it has laid down the conditions for a universal community. Faced with today's dead-ends, Orthodoxy has more than ever a role to play, and it must resume its place in the forefront in the launching of initiatives for world reconciliation. The horror of war — especially war with modern arms systems which would in any conflict eliminate all traces of life on the planet — forces Orthodoxy to condemn in the strongest terms all the causes of war and means of destroying God's gift of human life.

In an age of universalism like ours, our church must — aside from its responsibilities relating to the personal transfiguration of the human being — use its authority and bring its witness for sustaining, defending, inspiring and (if necessary) guiding initiatives for restoring true fraternity and peace among humankind.

Only the church is capable of showing that "There are disorder and seats of war because we seek peace independently of its presuppositions: love, truth, liberty and justice; these conditions are so essential to peace that, where they exist, true peace follows of itself. So that peace may come on earth, we, the inhabitants of the earth, must learn justice."[30]

NOTES

[1] G. Mantzaridis, Christian Ethics, Salonika, 1983, p.20. (*in Greek*).

[2] Decisions of the Third Preconciliar Panorthodox Conference, *Epikepsis*, 369, 12 December 1986,(E)l,2;3;4.IV.2.

[3] *Ibid*. (E), 1,2.

[4] Cf. Cyril of Alexandria: Kata anthropomorphiton 2. PG 76, 1080; cf. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Discourses* 38.11.PG 36,317 *et seq*.; also St. John Damascenus: *Ekdosis Orthodoxou Pisteos* ll,12,30. PG 94,971;976.

[5] Cf. Eph. 4:22 "Put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts."

[6] Cf. Eph. 4:32 "Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."

[7] Cf. Eph. 5:1 "Therefore be imitators of God as beloved children". Also 2 Pet. 1:3-4: "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, that through these you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion and become partakers of the divine nature." Cf. Eph. 5:21: "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ."

[8] Cf. 6:23; 18:6: "For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body and is himself its saviour."

[9] Cf. Ps. 84:9: "Behold our shield, o God; look upon the face of thy anointed."

[10] That is the meaning of the text in Isa. 11:1-6: "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse... Righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist and faithfulness the girdle

of his loins. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the bull and the lion will eat together, and a little child shall lead them."

[11] Isa. 9:5; cf. also "and peace shall have no bounds".

[12] Ps. 71:7.

[13] Eph. 6:15.

[14] N. Berdiaeff, *De la destination de l'homme*, Paris, 1935, p.79.

[15] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Discourses* 28,22. PG 36,57A: 322A.

[16] Cosmas Indicopleustes: Topography 5.

[17] Cf. N. Nissiotis, "L'Eglise dans la théologie orthodoxe grecque", in *L'Eglise et Société*, Geneva, 1966.

[18] *Ibid.*

[19] This aspect (well known in the Orthodox church) emphasized the distinction between ecclesiology and Christology, which hardly appeared in the Western church until the Second Vatican Council. During the meetings the Catholics (especially the Uniates) criticized the absence of the Holy Spirit in the Latin Ecclesiology.

[20] Ps. 40:7.

[21] Cf. Nissiotis, *ibid.*, t.I, p.62.

[22] Cf. G. Metallinos, "L'Orthodoxie au combat pour la paix", *Ekklisiastiki Alitheia*, 13, 1988, v. 281, p.3 (in Greek).

[23] PG 3,893-896.

[24] Cf. Mantzaridis, *op. cit.*, p.157.

[25] Cf. Ignatius of Antioch, Pras. Magnesieis 6.2, Pros Polykarpon, 1.3.

[26] Photius, Ammphidokhia 36, PG 101,253B.

[27] John 17:21; Archim. Basil, *Eisodikon*, Mount Athos, 1974, pp.59-60 (in Greek).

[28] *Logos Apodeiktikos* 2,78, ed. P. Christou, t.I, Salonika 1962, p.149 (in Greek).

[29] James 3:18.

[30] Christmas message 1982 from H.H. the Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios (in Greek).

The Integrity of Creation: Ethical Issues

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This paper focuses on the ethical issues arising from the theme "Integrity of Creation", including the general concerns of justice and peace, together with some of the more specific ethical issues of our day. Because all aspects of the Orthodox Tradition inter-relate with one another in an interpenetrating whole, the approach of Orthodox theology to creation can be approached from a number of different perspectives. I intend to base these few remarks on the understanding of humanity as "microcosm". Hopefully, this will lead both to a working understanding of the concept of the "Integrity of Creation" and to authentic Orthodox ethical stances.

In the Orthodox ethical tradition, there can be no treatment of concrete and specific ethical issues, whether they be personal, ecclesial or social, which are divorced from the foundational affirmations of the Orthodox Christian faith tradition. Ethics cannot be divorced from faith, since its norms are drawn from it, and every concrete Orthodox moral injunction is ultimately derived from foundational Orthodox faith affirmations and the Orthodox way of life.[1]

The integrity of creation

It is indisputably true that Orthodox Christianity approaches the totality of reality in an integrated, coherent and comprehensive manner, which we have of late come to characterize as a holistic perspective. That this view is quite out of step with much Western Christian theological tradition, and contemporary mind-set of much scientific thought, has been noted by many commentators, both Orthodox and non-Orthodox.[2] Much Christian theology in the West has fostered a sharp distinction between human life and the rest of nature.

In this, modern science and Western Christianity walked hand in hand. A theology which spiritualized salvation as unconnected with the created world, contributed to the formation of the two major cultural realities of the West, i.e., a science which perceived itself as detached from nature and treated it as an object, and an economic system that approached nature with an understanding of "dominion" understood essentially as a license for the exploitation of nature.[3]

It is, I believe, possible to develop the Orthodox understanding of creation from several different approaches. But is seems to me that a profitable and fruitful approach for helping us understand the meaning of the phrase "Integrity of Creation" can come from some inferences based on the Orthodox doctrine of human nature. To this, we need to add a short discussion of "dominion".

The frequently expressed patristic idea of the human being as a "microcosm" is a useful starting place. The sphere of the non-human creation is differentiated from human existence in a qualitative way in the patristic tradition. Concurrently, the understanding of the human as a microcosm unites humanity with the non-human material world and with the world of the spirit.

The human condition relates to the earthly aspects of created existence as well as to the Creator. As such, it directly influences our thinking about the integrity of creation. As is well known, Eastern Orthodoxy's view of human nature is dynamic. This is articulated through the patristic understanding of the creation of humanity in the image and likeness of God, and through the Chalcedonian doctrine of the person of Jesus Christ. Both serve to give content to a vision of high human potential in spite of the reality of the fallen and distorted condition in which all of creation is found.

Perhaps St Gregory of Nazianzus can best articulate for us this vision of humanity as a microcosm in our quest to understand the meaning of the integrity of creation. In his *45th Oration*, he writes:

> The Craftsman-Word ... produced a single living being formed out of both (I mean the invisible and the visible natures); he produced man. He took the body from already existing matter and put in it a breath taken from himself (which the Word [of Scripture] knows as the intelligent soul and image of God). This man he set upon the earth as a kind of second world, a microcosm; another kind of angel, a worshipper of blended nature, a full initiate of the visible creation but a mere neophyte in respect of the intelligible world. He was king of all upon the earth, but a subject of heaven; earthly and heavenly; transient, yet immortal; belonging both to the visible and to the intelligible

> order; midway between greatness and lowliness; combining in the same being spirit and flesh; spirit, because of God's grace; flesh because raised up from the dust; spirit, so that he may endure, and glorify his benefactor; flesh that he may suffer, and by suffering may be reminded and chastened when his greatness makes him ambitious. Thus, he is a living creature under God's providence here, while in transition to another state and ... in process of deification by reason of his natural tendency towards God.[4]

In this understanding of human existence there is a perception of a deep connectedness with the material side of created reality. St Gregory says that we are fully involved in the material creation by nature of our physical existence, and implied is the opposite, i.e., that the material created reality is deeply involved with us. Should we move in the direction of deification of our nature in progress towards God, we will somehow carry the created material world with us. Should we move in the opposite direction, the created material world will suffer with us as well. As "another kind of angel" we are sent by God to minister to the created material world, and to serve as "king of all upon the earth", in the apt phrases of the wise bishop of Nazianzus.

Perhaps this can be best illustrated by the approach of the Orthodox Church towards that primaeval element of nature, water. The ecological dimension of the faith becomes clearer when the element of water, so essential for all of nature — mineral, vegetable and animal — is perceived not scientifically, in itself, nor in its multiple aspects of interrelatedness, but in reference to the goal of deification.

In the Orthodox feast of the Baptism of our Lord, the Feast of the Epiphany (which is sharply distinguished from the Western Christian Feast of the Epiphany which celebrates the visit of the Magi to the newly born Christ-child), creation is perceived as participating in Christ's saving work. The baptism of Christ in water is an important aspect of the hymnology of the day. The water takes on a representational character, a symbol of the material created world. The incarnate Son of God is immersed in it. Water becomes a vehicle for saving and sanctifying acts. As a symbol and representative element of the created world it intimately shares in the salvation of the world. Thus, one of the hymns instructs the worshippers: "... let us run to the undefiled fountains of the stream of salvation."[5]

While there is, of course, a distinction between the spiritual and material worlds, there is no sharp separation, much less a harsh contradiction. The salvation of the world, though primarily for the sake of humanity, precisely because the human being is a microcosm, is redemp-

tion for the material world as well. The spiritual and the material form one reality, God's creation. In the sacrament-like blessing of the water, it is perceived as becoming an agent of sanctification. The church thus prays: "Grant to all those who touch it, who anoint themselves with it or drink from it, sanctification, blessing, cleansing and health."[6]

We should note here three major points. First is the close and intimate relationship of the spiritual and the created reality. The second, often overlooked in Orthodox writings on the ecological dimension of the faith, is that the created world is also in need of grace, since it shares in the fallen condition of human existence. The third point to note is that the creation finds realization of the fullness of its potential only when it is in communion with the sanctifying presence and energies of God. The question is raised, however, as to how the material and the spiritual find this communion in wholeness.

One way is through the priestly role of human beings. Humanity, as the microcosm which links the material and non-human created reality with the ultimate purpose given by God for all of creation — that is, participation as fully as possible in the divine life of God — is given a responsibility for the created world as "angel" of God towards it, but also assumes dominion for its appropriate use and preservation. In some ways, though not exclusively, of course, man the microcosm deals with creation as priest, as a mediator between the creation and the Creator.

Newtonian science deplored an anthropocentrism which understood creation to exist for the sake of humanity. If the only two dimensions in the equation are the non-human creation and the human, then the understanding that the world exists only for humanity, without a meaning of is own, sets up the fearsome possibility of exploitation and defilement. Contrary to what some might think, to affirm that the world exists for the sake of humanity does not necessarily have that implication. This is the case if there is a third reality included, the transcendent reality of God, the Creator. Thus, in the theological vision of the Epiphany hymnology, water finds realization of the fullness of its potential only when it is in communion with the sanctifying presence and energies of God.

In some way, water and all creation participate in the purpose of divinization given to both the microcosm and the macrocosm by God. That changes everything. The creation exists for the use of humanity; but humanity exists as a microcosm to sanctify the creation and to draw it into the fullness of the life of the kingdom of God, to bring it into communion with its maker. On the one hand this means that the non-human creation is made for man. In the so-called Clementine Homilies of the third century,

there is a beautiful expression of this Christian truth. Speaking of the phenomena of nature, the author says:

> ...if anyone shall accurately scan the whole with reason, he shall find that God has made them for the sake of man. For showers fall for the sake of fruits, that man may partake of them, and that animals may be fed, that they may be useful to men. And the sun shines, that he may turn the air into four seasons, and that each time may afford its peculiar service to man. And the fountains spring, that drink may be given to men. And, moreover, who is lord over the creatures, so far as is possible? Is it not man, who has received wisdom to till the earth, to sail the sea: to make fishes, birds and beasts his prey; to investigate the course of the stars, to mine the earth, to sail the sea; to build cities, to define kingdoms, to ordain laws, to execute justice, to know the invisible God, to be cognizant of the names of angels, to drive away demons, to endeavour to cure diseases by medicines, to find charms against poison-darting serpents, to understand antipathies?[7]

That the natural creation exists for the appropriate use of humanity, is, however, no excuse for pride or for its abuse. In the following chapter, the author of the Clementine homily just quoted places humankind under God. "But if thou art thankful, O man, understanding that God is thy benefactor in all things, thou mayest even be immortal, the things that are made for thee having continuance through thy gratitude ... Wherefore, before all things, consider that no one shares His rule, no one has a name in common with Him — that is, is called God."[8]

Humanity is not a co-deity with God. There is another role for us. If the creation is called to offer its gift to humankind, humanity on the other hand is a priest called to sanctify the gift and the giver. The eucharistic anaphora has its ecological dimension as well: "We offer to You these gifts from Your own gifts in all and for all." The gifts are created gifts — bread from wheat, wine from grapes — and the church in the Eucharist offers God's own material creation back to God that it might be sanctified.

But there is another side of our relationship to the created world which also has an impact on our understanding of the integrity of creation. Like the microcosm, the macrocosm of creation is in a state of fallenness and distortedness. Just as humanity is "less than fully human" because of our alienation from God, in the same manner the creation sharing in the Fall is also "less than fully natural". Sin, which is separateness from God, pervades both. Humanity is in need of salvation. The problem is that the human person is free to respond to the saving work of Christ, while the creation labours under the limitation of necessity. It has neither the

adequate consciousness nor the necessary freedom to respond to the sanctifying grace of redemption and salvation.

To this dilemma, the response comes in terms of the priestly role of humanity. Humanity, through its priestly function, can lead nature to find its completion and fulfillment of communion with God. The seventh century churchman Leontios of Neapolis describes this reality: "The creation does not venerate the Creator through itself directly, but it is through me that the heavens declare the glory of God, through me the moon offers him homage, through me the stars ascribe glory to him, through me the waters, rain and dew, with the whole of the creation, worship and glorify him."[9] Thus, humanity, as the priestly microcosm, assumes the stance of mediator as well as king over the material creation. In Bishop Kallistos Ware's striking words, we humans are called "to give to physical objects a voice which in themselves they lack."[10]

How, then, does all this help us understand the concept of the "integrity of creation?" It seems to me that it points to several realities which appear clearly when stated in parallel with the human microcosmic situation:

1) In human nature the dominant aspect is spiritual, yet the material is essential to its wholeness. In the non-human creation the dominant aspect is material. Nevertheless, it shares, through the microcosmic dimensions of humanity, in the spiritual as well. There is a continuity and wholeness: an aspect of the integrity of creation.[11]
2) Yet, human beings are not fully human unless they participate in the divine life. The only true human being is the human being who has achieved Theosis. But "all men are sinners and have fallen short of the glory of God." That is why even those who have entered the life of the kingdom of God, still "wait for the adoption of sons". We are not fully integrated; and neither is creation . It too awaits its completion, "groaning in travail." There is a distortedness to creation, an "integrity" which is potential, but not complete. It, with us, "groans in travail," waiting in hope to be saved (Rom. 8).
3) Yet in human life, through Christ and the Spirit, there is the hope and the expectation of salvation and fulfillment. Similarly the "integrity of creation" is not yet fully realized; it too "waits in hope". The foretaste of the integrity of creation is experienced in the sacramental life of the church and in such liturgical expressions as the blessing of the waters at Epiphany.
4) Strikingly then, the realization of the "integrity of creation" depends upon the kingly and priestly functioning of the microcosmic reality of humanity. Unlike many environmentalists, both secular and religious,

who claim to be holistic by rejecting an anthropocentric approach,[12] I believe that the lynch-pin in understanding the full "integrity of creation" is not to dethrone humanity from its kingly and priestly responsibility for such integrity, but to focus on it. It is precisely through humanity's conscious assumption of its place as the responsible microcosm, as an "angel of God" towards the world, that creation can realise its integrity.

Ecology, justice and peace

These observations provide us with the central outline of an Orthodox Christian ethic of creation. Thus, as kings over creation our role is one which calls for its use, but not its abuse. As priests, we are responsible for its ultimate sanctification, as it waits with us for its redemption. As St Paul so dramatically stated it, "We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope, we are saved."[13] Together, our microcosmic priesthood and kingship underscore more than just an ontological relationship with the material world. They point to an "ought" relationship to it, that is to say, an ethical imperative and a moral responsibility towards it. By our very being as "microcosm" we cannot escape our God-given ecological obligation towards the material world.

What follows is an inadequate outline on a few of the ethical topics related to the ecological crisis of our time, in particular, the themes of Justice and Peace.

The theme of ecological justice may also be approached from the microcosmic perspective. In the patristic tradition there are two ways of understanding justice. One follows Plato in understanding justice as the right ordering of the parts of human nature and, by extension, in society. This view of justice is summarized in Clement of Alexandria's phrase, justice is "the harmony of the parts of the soul."[14] It is an organic and holistic approach to justice. Clearly, when this understanding of justice is applied ecologically it recognizes to each element of creation its essential claims and accords to them their just place in the scheme of things.[15] It is inclusive and holistic.

The other view of justice in the fathers is cast in a distributive mould. St Basil declares: "Justice is a permanent condition of distributing to each according to their value.[16] Thus, as applied to social justice issues, fathers such as Chrysostom understand justice as based on the inherent human

worth of the poor. Justice thus makes claims upon the wealthy, so that the essential needs of the poor may be met. Excess wealth, in justice, does not belong to the rich; it is only theirs as stewards for the poor.[17]

This distributive sense of justice is equally applicable in the ecological sphere. As regards human responsibility towards the created material world, the inherent value of the creation[18] makes ecological claims upon us. Just as in human life, the bodily aspect of our existence makes claims upon us for its proper treatment, so do the mineral, vegetable and animal aspects of creation.[19]

Consequently, the priestly role of humanity towards the creation cannot simply approach the created non-human world as an object for unlimited exploitation. Many things can be said here in terms of the ethical corollaries, but it seems to me that the first requirement of such a view of justice is consciousness-raising as to the justice of the ecological claim upon humanity, vis à vis our human penchant for egotistical self-concern. The terrible impact modern technology has on nature in terms of pollution alone is unjust in that it cavalierly over-rides the treatment and care due to the non-human creation, simply on the basis of its own value and worth before God.

On the other hand, extremist claims in some ecological circles ignore the kingly and priestly role of humanity, thus minimizing the worth and value of the human in the scheme of things. This may be a necessary tactic to restore a wholesome balance, but honesty requires a more even-handed assessment. Propaganda is hardly ever justice.

In a similar vein we can treat the issue of peace. After years of study on this issue, I have come to the conclusion that the Greek fathers do not have a theology of just war. War is evil in and of itself. Sometimes it may come to us as a tragic necessity; but in this case it is nothing more than a necessary evil. By its very denial of the rights which we normally accord fellow human beings it is by definition, an evil.[20] The true Orthodox focus is on the making of peace. The life of theosis is a life concerned with peacemaking. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall inherit the earth." The ecological implications of this Dominical beatitude are striking. The late Nikos Nissiotis articulated it well in a publication which came out in 1986, the year of his tragic and untimely death:

> (The) basic theological approach to peace, as of the essence of God as love and the outcome of the divine economy as reconciliation, has a deep effect on the whole place of man in God's creation. Peace has also to be the restored relationship of humanity with the cosmos of God, the created world of nature ... Everything around divided man has revolted, breaking away from the

> peace of God. The inclination to sin, while receiving the grace of God, creates a discontinuity in creation, both as nature and as history. Christian faith, therefore, has a double reconciliatory (goal) as its target. First, peace through the reconciliation of a human person with himself, and second, peace as relationship with others and with the whole cosmos and history. Peace in the anthropological and cosmological sense does not simply mean the negation of war and violence, but principally a hard process of reconciliation in and with one's self and the whole creation."[21]

This microcosmic role of humanity in bringing about peace, even with the non-human creation, holds true in every conflict situation. Needless to say, however, the ethical imperative to work for peace is made all the more demanding when the prospect of nuclear war threatens all of humanity; but even more, when it goes beyond the potential destruction of humanity to the nuclear pollution of the whole earth and all that is in it. Peacemaking in a nuclear age is a Christian moral imperative.[22]

Other ecologically related issues

The holistic perspective so characteristic of Orthodox theology, recognizes that every moral and ethical issue in one way or another is connected with every other issue. The microcosmic role of humanity truly places humanity at the centre of this inter-connected network of concerns. Almost every day brings increased awareness of the intimate ethical and moral connections between ourselves and the well-being of the non-human created reality. As we see ourselves both personally and ecologically striving, with the grace of God, to realize the integrity of creation in a way that does justice to all of its parts and to promoting the peaceful harmony of those inter-related parts with us, with one another, and most of all with God, we become aware both of the number of issues and their complexity.

The moral attack upon the integrity of creation by modern industrialized humanity is massive, deep and wide-spread. An aspect of the ecological crisis is pollution. One commentator has made a partial list for us, numbering among the concerns of pollution "solid waste, congestion and traffic noise, poor housing, and general ugliness, as well as air and water pollution... Most of our major metropolitan areas have been plagued recently by the problem of coping with their paper, cans and bottles, old automobile frames and other metals."[23] Our industrial and consumer life-styles have killed aquatic life in our rivers and harbours. Our fluorocarbons are depleting the ozone layer which protects all of life from the sun's ultraviolet rays. Our indiscriminate use of chemicals in our

foods and cosmetics have seen cancer become one of the greatest causes of death in our times. To this we can add the fearsome problem of nuclear disasters and the impact of radiation on human life, not to mention the ever increasing and unresolved issue of the disposition of nuclear waste. To put it in the words of the title of Jerome D. Frank's article of over 20 years ago, we face almost without resources, a "Galloping Technology, A New Social Disease".[24]

The environmental issues affect not only human, but animal, plant and even mineral well-being. The famous "nephos" of Athens is slowly eating away at the very structure of the Parthenon, while whole forests of trees in Germany suffer blight as a result of industrial pollutants in the air, water pollution eliminates species of fish forever from the earth, and human beings suffer and die of respiratory disease, cancer, birth defects, and a wide range of psychobehavioral and neurotoxic effects as a result of our ecological irresponsibility.[25]

Further, there is clear evidence that we are also creating negative effects upon the gene pool of the created world. Atomic testing, chemical preservatives, and now the irradiation of food, may well bring about genetically conveyed deformities and teratological phenomena. As all this happens unintentionally, others are deliberately altering the gene-pools of plants, animals and human beings.[26] We hope that we know enough so that good will result, but the very effort seems to many as an assault upon the order of things, or as Jane Goodfield put it in the title of her book on genetic engineering and the manipulation of life, we are *Playing God*,[27] and tinkering with a potential biological time bomb.[28]

All of this has implications for issues of population, the starvation of populations because of the mismanagement of the land, erosion, war and disease, and the increasing divisions between the rich and poor nations. The justice question cannot be separated from the ecological crises which we face, including the economic costs of addressing the ecological harm to our industrialized contemporary society. The awful temptation of the first world to force the developing nations to bear the brunt promises to make bad things worse.

One could go on with this litany of ecological sin. It may be that humanity as the microcosm will be able to halt and reverse these forces of sin. If the human race is to do so, it will need to repent, to change its way of thinking and doing and evaluating and living. In the place of the profligate waste of human resources we will need to rediscover the ancient virtues of frugality and *autarkeia* i.e., simple sufficiency.[29] But beyond that, humanity must come to see itself as intimately related to the

non-human creation, to see itself as one with it in deep and profound community with it. In fact, humanity must come to see itself for what it really is, both king and priest of God's creation, with a profound sense of our sacred calling, to minister to the creation, to offer it as a sacrament to God, to serve its legitimate needs, to protect its purity and wholesomeness, to present it like a liturgical *anaphora* to its Lord.

A prayer

Let me conclude with a prayer written by Clement of Alexandria in the mid-third century. It is found towards the end of his work *The Educator (Paidagogos)*. The unity and oneness of humanity with God on the one hand, and with the rest of creation on the other is the theme of the prayer. It is a prayerful expression of the Christian understanding of the wholeness of all things, even in their distinctiveness and uniqueness. It is a prayer for the realization of the "Integrity of Creation in Justice and in Peace" even though he never uses the phrase:

> O God, the Educator and the Instructor, Lord,
> ...(g)ive to us, who follow thy command, to fulfill the likeness of thy image, and to see, according to our strength, the God who is both a good God and a Judge who is not harsh. Do thou thyself bestow all things on us who dwell in thy peace, who have been placed in thy city, who sail the sea of sin unruffled, that we may be made tranquil and, supported by the Holy Spirit — the unutterable Wisdom — by night and day, unto the perfect day, to sing eternal thanksgiving to the one only Father and Son, Son and Father, Educator and Teacher with the Holy Spirit. All things are for the One, in whom are all things, through whom, being the One, are all things, through whom eternity is, of whom all men are members, to whom is glory, and the ages, whose are all things in their goodness; all things in their beauty; all things in their wisdom; all things in their justice. To Him be glory now and forever. Amen.

NOTES

[1] Stanley S. Harakas, *Toward Transfigured Life: The Theoria of Eastern Orthodox Ethics*, Minneapolis, MN, Light & Life Publishing Co., 1983, Ch. 1 and 2.

[2] For example, a brief perusal of just two such writings confirms the observation: Paulos Gregorios, "The Human Presence: an Orthodox View of Nature", Geneva, WCC, 1978; J. Robert Nelson, "Science and Our Troubled Conscience", Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1980. See also *Faith, Science and the Future*, Geneva, WCC, 1979.

[3] An interesting holistic treatment of the exploitation of land by agriculture in the USA, with both its scientific and economic aspects, is to be found in L. Shannon Jung, "Ethics, Agriculture, and the Material Universe", in *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics*,

1986, Alan B. Anderson, *et al.* eds, Knoxville, TN, Society of Christian Ethics, 1987, pp.219-250.

[4] Gregory of Nazianzus, "Orations", 45,8 in Henry Bettenson, ed., *The Later Christian Fathers*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1970, p.101.

[5] *The Festal Menaion*, tr. Mother Mary and Archim. Kallistos Ware, London, Faber & Faber, 1969, p.372.

[6] *Ibid.*, p.357.

[7] Homily III, ch. XXXIX, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Grand Rapids, MI, Wm. B. Eerdman, 1951, Vol. VIII, p.245.

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] "Ek tou Pemptou Logou Yper tes Christianon Apologias kata Ioudaion Kai Peri Eikonon Aghion", Migne, PG, 93, 1604B. I am indebted to Bishop Kallistos Ware for this passage, in his article "The Value of the Material Creation", in *Sobornost*, Series 6, No. 3, 1971, pp.156-157.

[10] *Ibid.*, p.156.

[11] Issa J. Khalil, "The Ecological Crisis: an Eastern Christian Perspective", in *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No. 4, 1978. Stanley S. Harakas, "Ecology: a Christian Oversight?" in *Contemporary Moral Issues Facing the Orthodox Christian*, revised and expanded, Minneapolis, MN, Light & Life Publishing Co., 1982, sec. 41.

[12] For example, Frederick Elder, *Crisis in Eden*, Nashville, Abingdon, 1970.

[13] Romans 8:22-24a.

[14] Stromateis, 4,26.

[15] See Clement of Alexandria, *Paidagogos*, I,8.

[16] "...esti de dikaiosyne exis aponemetike tou kat' axian", St Basil, "Eis tin Archen ton Paroimion", Homily 12,8 ,Migne PG,31, 401 B.

[17] Peter C. Phan, "Social Thought", Vol. 20 in the series, *The Message of the Fathers of the Church*, Wilmington, DL, Michael Glazier, 1984.

[18] See supra Kallistos Ware, "The Value of the Material Creation".

[19] For discussions on various aspects of this topic, see my publications *For the Health of Body and Soul: an Eastern Orthodox Introduction to Bioethics* Holy Cross Orthodox Press; "Human Rights: an Eastern Orthodox Perspective", in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 3, 1982, pp.13-24 (Also published in Arlene Swidler ed., *Human Rights in Religious Traditions*, New York, Pilgrim Press, 1982), "Christian Faith Concerning Creation and Biology", in *La théologie dans l'Eglise et dans le monde: les études théologiques de Chambésy*, 4, Chambésy, Switzerland, 1984, pp.226-247; "Health and Medicine in the Orthodox Church", in Ronald L. Numbers & Darrel W. Amundsen, *Caring and Curing: Health and Medicine in Western Religious Traditions*, New York, Macmillan, 1986, pp.146-172; "Orthodox Christianity and Bioethics", in N.M. Vaporis ed., *Orthodox Christians and Muslims*, Brookline, MA, Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1986, pp.155-185.

[20] For some of my views on this issue see "Foundations of Orthodox Christian Social Vision", in *Diakonia*, Vol. XVIII, No. 2, 1983; "The NCCB Pastoral Letter: 'The Challenge of Peace' — An Eastern Orthodox Response", in *Peace in a Nuclear Age: the Bishop's Pastoral Letter in Perspective*; Charles J. Reid Jr. ed., Washington, DC: The Catholic University Press, 1986. Especially note "The Teaching of Peace in the Fathers", in *Un regard orthodoxe sur la paix,* Chambésy, Editions du Centre orthodoxe du patriarcat oecuménique, 1986, pp.32-47.

[21] "Religion, Christian Faith and Peace", in *Un regard orthodoxe sur la paix*, *op. cit.*, 1986, p.95.

[22] See my forthcoming article, "Peace in the Nuclear Context", presented at the Third International Conference of Orthodox Theological Schools, September 1987. Accepted for publication in the "Proceedings" by the Holy Cross Orthodox Press.

[23] Joseph L. Fisher, "Dimensions of the Environmental Crisis", in *Zygon*, Vol. 5, No. 4, 1970, pp.274-283.

[24] *The Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 22, No. 4, 1966.

[25] Samuel S. Epstein, "Environmental Health and Human Disease", in *Encyclopedia of Bioethics*, Warren T. Reich, ed. New York, Free Press, Macmillan Publishing Co., 1978, Vol. 1, pp.379-387.

[26] Sharon McAuliffe & Kathleen McAuliffe, *Life for Sale*, New York, Coward, McCann & Georghegan, 1981.

[27] *Playing God: Genetic Engineering and the Manipulation of Life*, New York, Harper Colophon Books, 1979.

[28] Gordon Rattray Taylor, *The Biological Time Bomb*, New York, New American Library, 1969.

[29] Stanley S. Harakas, "The Ethics of the Energy Crisis", in *Contemporary Moral Issues, op.cit.*, sec. 42.

Creation from the Viewpoint of Dogmatic Theology

PLATON IGUMNOV

The origin of the dogma of creation

In order to determine the main principle of God's relation to the world the church introduced the notion of "creation" into the system of its doctrine.[1] This introduction of the notion of creation into the doctrine and theology of the church presupposed the solution of a whole complex of ideological problems.

First of all it was necessary to take up and interpret correctly the Old Testament revelation texts on creation in the light of the teaching of the New Testament. The task was to extract the meaning of the biblical text which culturally and linguistically was remote from the church fathers in space and time, and to coordinate it with the real context of understanding the world as the revelation of the same God about whom the revelation speaks. At the same time attention was mainly paid not to the chronological and genealogical concept of the world, but to the speculative perception of the world as a perfect creation of God in its integral magnificence and variety of forms of existence composing the earthly and heavenly hierarchy recognized as being based upon the Holy Trinity, the source of life and unity.[2] In relation to the good news of the New Testament on redemption and theosis of man, the idea of creation was understood as a quite necessary ideological precondition.

Secondly, it was necessary to coordinate the teaching of God the Creator with the trinitarian theology of the church, to express dogmatically the truth revealed by God that the creation is the action of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity. We find the idea of St Basil the Great who understands the creation in a threefold aspect as a cause, an action and an aim: "In the creation we should understand the original cause of the Father as a founding cause, the cause of the Son as a creative one, and the cause of the Spirit as an implementing one."[3] Thus the main principle of

God's relation to the world (which was recognized as the creation) included the relation of three divine hypostases of the Holy Trinity to the world. St Augustine has a teaching of "vestigia Trinitatis", the traces or signs of the Trinity which can be found in the created world.[4]

Thirdly, the task of coordinating the divine and the created levels of existence was a serious difficulty for the theology of the church. This problem was known to the philosophy of the ancients; in Christianity it created numerous gnostic sects that were extremely dangerous not only to the purity of the Orthodox dogmatic teaching, but also to the very existence of the church. The Orthodox concept of creation received its final and summarized form in the dogmatic teaching of Palamism in which God — recognized as absolutely inscrutable by his nature and essence — is revealed in his actions, "energies" and manifestations which are creative and providential actions of God. While solving the question of a real distinction between the divine essence and its energies, the Councils of Constantinople of 1341, 1351 and 1368 laid down that God is completely inscrutable in his essence which cannot be an object of knowledge and vision even for angels in beatitude, since the divine Being reveals himself and can be known to them in his uncreated and divinizing energies.[5] The distinction between the divine essence and the divine actions established a clear division between the divine and the created natures. This was the result of the more than millennial history of the Christian dogmatical thinking based upon the intersection of two mutually excluding foundations: the biblical revelation and the philosophical tradition of the ancients.

For very different reasons neither the Epicurean nor the Stoic philosophy, but only a moderate Platonism was able to provide elements in helping Christianity to reflect on the correspondence between the Creator and the creation and to formulate the dogma of the creation from nothing (*creatio ex nihilo*).[6]

This thesis expressed by the German Catholic theologian Gerhard Mai in his *Creation ex nihilo*, needs to be clarified. The idea of God the Creator in an absolute meaning proper to the Christian teaching was completely alien to Greek philosophy and especially to Platonism. "According to Plato all existing exists eternally, and God, the demiurge deals only with the establishment of order."[7] While in Platonism the eternity of ideas played a central role, the teaching of Aristotle affirmed the eternal, unchangeable and philosophically abstract initial cause of every existence and movement, its internal goal.[8] But the "God of Aristotle is not a personal God; it is only the final condition of the world

movement, the world process, and, therefore, of the world being in general, the initial cause of the universe."[9] The Greek philosophers' notion of the absolute origin "fully corresponded to the categories of human reason".[10] The God of the Revelation was understood in a completely different way.

The Revelation does not mention the existence of matter before that of the world, i.e., matter in Plato's sense of "*mê ôn*".[11] The problem of the creation of the world is presented by Philo of Alexandria in the most brilliant way for the whole of Hellenic Judaism. The God of the Bible is an absolute divinity above the world, and nothing exists eternally besides him. "Philo tirelessly proclaims this divinity above all natural and created things and above the cosmos. It is so great and perfect that no feature can be ascribed to it. Any such features even understood in an extreme perfection, cannot correspond to this highest foundation."[12] At the same time Philo recognizes a personal God in the God of the Bible, and even while "recognizing the absolute inscrutability and transcendence of the divine he looked for ways to him and for reconciliation in him".[13] The biblical idea of God radically differed from all that could be presented by ancient philosophy. The pagan Greek educated in the Greek philosophical tradition could understand nothing. "He could think about the divine beyond the world and above the world. But for him this was mainly Plato's One, i.e., a soulless, impersonal, nameless and purely arithmetical generalization and unity of all really existing. But the ancient Greek could not understand personally his absolute."[14] And the fact that all existing "begins to exist only...as a result of the action of God's creation, a creation from nothing, so that in all created shines the eternal image of a quite personal creator"[15] was for the whole of ancient thinking completely new, not only an ideological revolution, but also a moral and cosmological revolution.

In general the concept of the creation of the world as an ideological system and mainly as a phenomenon of ideological culture begins in the church. Plato "re-evaluated" the attitude to matter: matter was to explain the evil in the world. Hence we can conclude how the holy fathers of the church understood what dangerous consequences can be provoked by the teaching of the eternity of matter and of its essential evil. The recognition of the eternity of matter and the recognition of the creation from nothing "are not two different explanations of the world or two different guides in life, but two existences of equal nature".[16] In the teaching on creation this is the main question referring not only to cosmology, but also to soteriology. "There is an objectivity; this is the creation created by God.

To live and to feel together with the whole creation..., to see in this creation another, a supreme nature...But to say this is the same as to require a restored, i.e. spiritual personality."[17] The church dogma of the creation of the world gave matter its authentic ontological place in the world, and the defence of matter against the accusation of being evil was based upon the fact of the incarnation of the God-Word which "enhypostasized" human nature.[18] Thus the dogma of creation should be evaluated as an important ontological factor forming the person. The correctness of views upon the creation in the dogmatic field opens the way and the possibility of theosis. The cosmos received through the senses and the cosmos understood through reason are concentrated in the soul contemplating — as in a mirror — the divinizing energies in their purified reflection, in which there participate first of all contemplative beings — angels, pure images imitated by the human soul. This is a complete reversal of Plato's perspective. While for Platonists, the world grasped through reason is opposed to the world of the senses and belongs to the divine sphere, having the same nature as God, for the holy fathers of the church the ontological division is between the created world with its visible and invisible hierarchies and the very essence of God.[19] The soul searching for God "rises and sees with its reason the world understandable through reason, as well as the supercosmic world..., without recognizing among the incorporeal and understandable with reason the One, whom it wishes to recognize; leaving all received, it sees the One, whom it looks for only because it does not understand that He exists (in himself)."[20] The contemplation ("theoria") leads to "theosis". The recognition of matter as God's creation is a necessary precondition for the theosis of the flesh which is "one of the aspects of the salvation of man and cosmos".[21] Hence it becomes clear what basic significance was attributed by the church to the dogmatic truth of the creation from nothing. In general "all the complicated struggle for dogmata carried on by the church through the centuries is first of all — if we analyze it from a purely spiritual viewpoint — a tireless attempt on the part of the church in each historical moment to give Christians a possibility of achieving a full mystical union with God."[22]

One can speak of the hierarchical structure of the dogma of creation: "the essence of the dogma is mystical";[23] its truth is hidden in a suprarational mystery; instead of adapting it to our mode of reception, we on the contrary should try to transform in depth our own reason, to transfigure it internally in order to be able to receive in this way the mystical experience".[24] In its hidden essence the dogma of creation cannot be an object of an abstract intellectualism or utilitarian moralism, since, like

any other dogma, it is not a "rational" theory or moral practice; it is a "mystical revelation, it is given to the mystical reception revealing the divine mysteries of being, upon which depends the whole fullness of our life".[25] This is the noumenal essence of the dogma of creation. God is the creator of everything. Above being and non-being he is the creator of all categories of being: time, eternity, space, fields, forces, matter and movement, i.e. all that determines the paradigm "of any introduction into the sphere of the senses";[26] life and reason are "inscribed" in the general law of relations in time and space, as well as of a real physical environment, possessing unique regularities protecting them from destruction and dissolution.

Reception and development

On the other hand, in its reception and understanding of phenomena the dogma of creation passed through a long history with abundant rational and logical premisses, conclusions and arguments. All this material contained in the church tradition and the Christian philosophical heritage, being the periphery of the hierarchical structure of the dogma of creation, is based upon the truth proclaimed by St Paul, who speaking about God affirmed that "Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely his eternal power and dignity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made" (Rom. 1:20). This is why, following the thinking of the patrologists, the Western scholastic philosopher Anselm of Canterbury formulated the ontological proof of the being of God.

According to S.S. Averintsev, Anselm "proves" nothing, but suggests that we analyze the notion of "being", and since being is the most important perfection, concludes that the notion of the most perfect perfection, i.e. God, includes also the notion of being. Being and the supreme perfection are in an intimate propinquity; thus they should coincide somewhere. This is the thinking which was important not only for Dionysios the Areopagite and Anselm, but also for Descartes and Hegel.[27] According to N. Lossky, philosophical contemplation establishes with an absolute trustfulness that the world, being a systematical unity of numerous elements, cannot be an original, independent being; where there are at least two elements united in a certain relationship, there should be a third foundation embracing these two elements and being a condition for the possibility of a relationship between them. If the world is a systematical unity penetrated with relations, the super-systematical origin as its foundation is above the world.[28]

From the viewpoint of the schema of concepts of systematic analysis (system, organization, integrity, link, structure, level, hierarchy, etc.) the world created by God can be presented in terms of a description in time and space. Among different definitions of the system, given in philosophical literature, the following is quite possible: "a given organization is called a system, if all elements included in it are united by a general structure of time and space".[29] Even from the viewpoint of the analysis of fundamental methodological and ideological problems of quantum physics, "today we have nothing else but to come to the concept of integrity".[30]

The noumenal essence of the dogma of creation remains unchangeable, unshakeable, and independent of any external causes; but at the same time its phenomenal reception can be enriched through the experience of theological thinking, characterizing the level of theological consciousness in each historical epoch.

As a necessary element of the doctrine of the church the dogma of creation from nothing becomes for us quite clear in the retrospective of the almost bi-millennial history of the Christian ideological culture. The church doctrine of creation from nothing was formed in the second and third centuries when the church was struggling against paganism and gnosticism. Originally in the works of the apostolic fathers we find that the whole world and the order dominating the world are created by God. St Clement, Bishop of Rome, presents an artistic description of the world harmony established by God: "By his order the heavens moving in the world obey him day and night, they perform the movement determined for them...The sun and the stars shine following in harmony the ways determined by him without deviation...The unlimited sea, by his will united in great water masses, does not go beyond the limits established by him...The ocean impenetrable for man, the worlds behind it, are administered by the same orders of God. The seasons — spring, summer, autumn and winter — peacefully replace each other. The winds determined for each season, perform their ministry without obstacles. The inexhaustible sources created for delight and health, provide permanently water necessary for human life."[31]

We find the doctrine of creation from nothing in Christian apologetics. If the main thesis of the cosmology of St Justin the Philosopher is that God is the Father and the creator of everything,[32] according to his disciple Tatianus, "the Lord of all, being the foundation of everything, was one before the world".[33] The Logos, born in the beginning, created the whole world, "creating himself the substance for himself".[34] Tertullian's

doctrine of creation is presented in his work "Contra Hermogenum". Tertullian rejects Hermogenus' opinion admitting the existence of eternal matter receiving separate features under the influence of the power of God, transforming the matter deprived of quality. At the same time, evil and the imperfection of the world are explained by the resistance of matter to the creative influence. Recognizing the absoluteness of God Tertullian rejected the eternity of matter and explained the dogmatical teaching of the creation from nothing.[35] The eternity of matter was rejected also by St Clement of Alexandria and St Dionysios of Alexandria who presented the criticism of Epicurean atomism.[36] Finally we can mention one of the most famous fighters against gnosticism: St Ireneus of Lyon. In his second book "Contra Haereses" St Ireneus rejects the gnostical errors "using the philosophical-dialectical method".[37] Here he presents in full detail the groundlessness of a dualist view of God and the world and the Valentinian idea of matter as a substance independent from God. While proving the falsehood and logical disharmony of such ideas St Ireneus of Lyon presents the church doctrine of the one God, the creator of the spiritual and material world.[38]

One should recognize the second question in the system of Christian cosmology: the question of the time of creation. Nevertheless this question has not the basic importance of the question of the creation from nothing. Different theological opinions here have the right to exist. Using the allegorical method in interpreting the biblical interpretation of the creation in six days, St Clement of Alexandria indicated the logical, but not the chronological order of the creation of the world: the world was created in one moment.[39] St Ephraim Syrus categorically rejected the opinion of the Alexandrian school about instantaneous creation: "One cannot think that all created in some days was created in one moment". According to him, the first verse of Genesis speaks about the elemental creation, about the creation of the original substance or its parts composing the universe, about the creation of heaven and earth in their substance, extracted from nothing.[40] St John Chrysostom also rejected the Alexandrian theory of instantaneous creation and followed the strict historical method of the Antiochean trend in theology. St John compares the Creator with an architect who establishes an enormous building in several stages. But, unlike human beings, God begins the construction of the building from above; he created first of all the heavens, i.e. the roof of the world, and then he created the earth, i.e. the foundation. According to St John, God could create the whole universe in one moment, but he did not choose to do so; on the contrary, he decided to adapt himself in a certain

degree to us, to our way of acting. He wantd also to show that the present world is not the result of chance, but of wise Providence constructing everything according to the weight, number and measure.[41] According to St Augustine, God created the world in one moment.[42] But in order to adapt it to our weak reason, he decided to present the creation as if it were created over time. The formless matter did not precede in time the created things, since everything was created at the same moment: the matter as an origin for things, and the created things themselves.[43] "Your creations, O God", writes St Augustine, "were created by you from nothing and not from you, not from a certain matter which would have come not from you and would have existed previously, but from the matter created at the same time by you; since without any delay of time you gave to this matter its form with the existence. One thing is the matter of heaven and earth, and another thing is their form, and you created the matter from nothing and the form from the matter, both together, so that the form followed the matter without any delay in time."[44]

The opinion of St Augustine differs from the opinions of St Basil the Great and other fathers. Augustine sees the creative act not only in the six days, but also in the laws of nature today. At the same time he shared with the Alexandrians the theory of the simultaneous creation accepting with the Syrians and Cappadocians the literal sense, but he did not recognize the real difference in days.

Finally one should note that no father of the church expressed the idea that the six days of creation were periods of an indeterminate length. However, the opinion that the universe originally existed formlessly and only later different forms of material existence were created, was expressed by Saints Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, Gregory of Nyssa, Ephraim Syrus, Ambrose of Milan, etc.

A feature with an important and decisive significance for the Christian concept of the creation of the world is that of a dynamic presentation of the idea of an absolute "good". The Platonic system is already crowned by the "good", which continues to be understood ethically by the whole line of scholars studying Plato and Plotinus, although these two philosophers call it "the sun" giving power to see and to be seen, and, therefore, to exist itself as "something super-visible and super-seeing".[45] The fathers and the teachers of the church unanimously called the goodness of God the cause of the creation. "The whole universe, the movement of planets, the mysterious life of constellations, all that is immerged in the element of time, is subject to the measure and number and has the "pre-world" good as its cause."[46] Saints Gregory the Theolo-

gian, Athanasius the Great, Theodorite, Augustine, John Chrysostom, John Damascene, and others unanimously express the dogmatical conviction that God created the universe only by his unlimited goodness, wishing that human beings guided from non-being into being, together with the whole world, may become participants in his goodness. Here the ontological significance is that the good is always with us and never leaves us; and we cannot but remember it or know something about it; it is inseparable from us. All that exists in the world, being the creation of the good God, is also good, since in a certain degree, in the measure of the proximity to God, it reflects the light of his perfect goodness. Dionysios the Areopagite expresses in the most brilliant way in the early patrology the doctrine of God's goodness which "enlightens all that can be enlightened, builds up, vivifies, protects, perfects, is the measure of all existing, the stability, the number, the order, the volume, the cause and the goal".[47]

For Dionysios the good is the principle of being, the "creation" is so close to the "theosis", that it is difficult for us to distinguish the original state of the creation and its final aim — the union with God,[48] — since the incarnation of Christ liberated man from the non-being, from the impossibility of ascending to the divine.[49] This common action of the Holy Trinity presented in the mission of the Son and the Spirit sent by the Father as a double "oikodomia", creative and implementing, grants to the creation not only being, but also good being.[50]

From these basic theological ideas of the Holy Fathers concerning the creation, we should recognize that the dogma of the creation of the world by the absolute and good God from nothing is a concept of the creation of the world that includes a very deep ideological and ethical sense, presupposing the affirmation of a personal understanding of being, and, therefore, of an absolute and unique value of the human person.

NOTES

[1] The doctrine of the relationship of God to the world should include the doctrine of God the creator and his actions in the creation of the world. Philaret, Archbishop of Chernigov, Orthodox Dogmatic Theology, SPbg, 1882, p.118.

[2] G.F. Florovsky, *Byzantine Fathers of the Fifth to Eighth Centuries*, Paris, 1922, p.110.

[3] St Basil the Great, *De Spiritu Sancto*, PG, 32, col. 136B.

[4] I. Kh. Cherniak, *Humanism of the Renaissance and the Ancient Christian Thinking: Antique Heritage in the Renaissance Culture*. "Nauka", Moscow, 1984, p.35.

[5] Vl. Lossky, *The Tradition of the Fathers and Scholasticism,* "Bogoslovskie Trudy", No. 18, Moscow, Moscow Patriarchate, 1978, p.118.

[6] Gerhard Mai, "The Appearance of the Doctrine of 'creatio ex nihilo'". *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie*, No. 4, 1980.

[7] John Meyendorff, *Introduction into the Theology of the Holy Fathers*, New York, 1982, p.187.

[8] Popov-Permsky, The First Day of the Creation of the World: a Historical Apologetical Essay, "Vera i Razum", No. 2, 1917, Kharkov, p.193.

[9] S.N. Trubetskoy, Historical Course in Ancient Philosophy, P.2. Moscow, 1912, p.92.

[10] Meyendorff, *op.cit.*, p.187.

[11] Archimandrite Silvestr, *Essay on Orthodox Dogmatical Theology*, P.3. Kiev, 1885, p.13.

[12] A.F. Losev, *History of Ancient Aesthetics: the Late Hellenism.* Moscow, "Iskusstvo", 1980, p.84.

[13] L.P. Karsavin, *The Holy Fathers and Teachers of the Church*, Paris, p.13.

[14] A.F. Losev. *op. cit.*, p.84.

[15] *Ibid.*, p.84.

[16] Viacheslav Ivanov, *Furrows and Boundaries, Aesthetical and Critical Essays*, Moscow, "Musaget", 1916, p.8.

[17] Pavel Florensky, *The Pillar and the Bulwark of the Truth*, Moscow, 1914, p.263.

[18] V.M. Zhivov, The "Mystagogy" of Maxim the Confessor and the Development of the Byzantine Theory of the Image: the Artistic Language of the Middle Ages, "Nauka". Moscow, 1982, p.108.

[19] Vl. Lossky, *The Cappadocians*. "Bogoslovskie Trudy", No. 25. Ed. Moscow, Moscow Patriarchate, 1984, p.167.

[20] St. Gregory of Nyssa, .i.Sixth Sermon on the Beatitudes, PG 44, col. 893.

[21] Zhivov, *op. cit.*, p.120.

[22] Vladimir Lossky, *Essay of Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, "Bogoslovskie Trudy", No. 8. Moscow, Moscow Patriarchate, 1972, p.10.

[23] N.A. Berdiaev, *Dogma and the Perfect Knowledge*. Edouard Leroy, *Dogma and Criticism*, Moscow, 1915, p.17.

[24] Lossky, *op. cit.*, p.10.

[25] Berdiaev, *op. cit.*, p.17.

[26] M.M. Bakhtin, *Issues of Literature and Aesthetics: Studies of Different Years,* Moscow, 1975, p.406.

[27] S.S. Averintsev, *Poetics of Early Byzantine Literature*, "Nauka". Moscow 1977, p.38.

[28] N. Lossky, *Conditions of an Absolute Good. Foundations of Ethics*, Paris, 1949, p.49.

[29] A.S. Abasov, *Space and Time, Moral-Temporal Organization*, "Voprosy filosofii", No. 11, Moscow, 1985, p.77.

[30] I.Z. Tsekhmistro, *Paradox of Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen and the Concept of Integrity*, "Voprosy filolsofii", No. 4, Moscow, 1985, p.94.

[31] St Clement, Bishop of Rome. First Letter to Corinthians, ch. 20. *The Early Fathers of the Church: Anthology*, Brussels, 1987, pp.55-56.

[32] Doctrine of St Justin the Martyr in its Relation to the Pagan Philosophy. "Vera i Razum", No. 15, Kharkov, 1893, p.125.

[33] Tatianus, *Sermon Against Greeks*, ch. 5. *The Early Fathers of the Church: Anthology*. Brussels, 1978, pp.373-374.

[34] *Ibid.*, ch. 5, p.374.

[35] K.E. Skurat, Patrology for the Second Course of the Moscow Theological Academy, 1978, pp.161-162.
[36] *Ibid.*, p.207,251.
[37] S.A. Fedchenkov, St Ireneus of Lyon. *Life and Literary Activity*, Sergiev Posad, 1017, p.362.
[38] *Ibid.*, pp.362-363.
[39] Skurat, *op.cit.*, p.207.
[40] A. Pavlovich, *Biblical Cosmogony According to the Doctrine of the Fathers and Teachers of the Church*, "Strannik", v. 2, SPbg, 1898, p.4.
[41] St John Chrysostom, *Sermons on the Genesis*.
[42] St Augustine, *Confession*, I,IX,v.III,5.
[43] Pavlovich, "Strannik", v.3.SPbg, 1898, p.38.
[44] St Augustine, *Confession*, XIII, pp.33,48.
[45] A.F. Losev, *Essays on Ancient Symbolism and Mythology*, Moscow, 1930, p.92.
[46] V.V. Ivanov, *Christian Symbolism in the Theology of "Corpus Areopagiticum"*, year study work in church archeology. Moscow, 1972, p.53.
[47] St Dionysios the Areopagite, *De Divinis nominibus*, 697C.
[48] Vl. Lossky, *Essay of Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, "Bogoslovskie Trudy", Moscow, Moscow Patriarchate, 1972, p.53.
[49] Zhivov, *op. cit.*, p.112.
[50] Lossky, *op. cit.*, p.55.

Aspects of the Biblical Theology of Creation

VASILE MIHOC

I shall begin by making clear two points. Firstly, that a Christian theology of creation cannot be elaborated only on the basis of the first chapters of Genesis. The creation has a beginning, but it has also a history.

And secondly, that in the centre of this history of creation is the re-creative work of Christ, a re-creative work whose full realization will be in the *eschaton*. Hence, the axis of the theology of creation must be Jesus Christ and his redemptive work. By him, the Son of God, all things were created *en archê*; by him also, and for him, the creation is renewed, and is moving to its final destiny.

St Ireneus of Lyon summarized well these two ideas by naming Christ: *to idion plasma sôzôn* — "He who saves the work of his hands."[1]

On this basis, I want to point to some aspects of the biblical theology of creation, related to the problems of justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

1. In Genesis 1-2, all things were created by God and described by him as "good". This perspective excludes all Manichaeism, with its opposition between the material and spiritual worlds. The biblical conception of the material creation is firmly positive. The church has condemned Manichaeism and, in its creed, borne witness that God, almighty Father, is "the creator of heaven and earth". Heaven and earth, the spiritual world and the material world, both are the creation of the unique God. They cannot be opposed to each other, having a common origin and, therefore, a common destiny. The creation in its integrity is a positive reality, the good work of the good God.

2. The world — humanity included — is a perfect unity, in the same way as a human body is perfectly harmonised. This organic unity is not contradicted by the fact that God qualifies individually as "good" the

different stages of creation. In his *Hexaemeron*, St Basil of Caesarea explains this, saying that the Creator is an artist (sculptor) who can see the beauty of his finalized work in every part of it.[2]

In its integrity at the beginning, the world was for man a "garden", a "paradise" (*paradeisos*), which signifies that humanity was in a perfect harmony with the world.

3. By its body, formed by God out of dust from the ground, the human being is part of the material world and, therefore, in full solidarity with it. It cannot be isolated from the rest of the creation. It was put in the middle of God's creation and depends — for the things necessary to life — on the material world (Gen. 1:28, 2:8). This dependence is not a yoke, but a blessing (1:28).

4. Human dominion over the world (Gen. 1:26-28) has its ground in "the image of God" received at the creation. This dominion over nature is not only a right; it is also a mission, a service. The Lord God put the man in the garden of Eden "to till it and keep it" (Gen. 2:15). The relation between humanity and environment cannot be reduced to one of need and use alone; it has to be a dynamic relation. Humanity itself has to be a creator. Genesis 2:5 says that there was a time when "no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up — for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no man to till the ground". God and humanity are presented here together as partners in the development of the creation. Hence the human being "can actualize freely the developmental possibilities of the world, and because God helps in this action, God remains in a relationship of liberty with the world and of collaboration with humanity. Hence, in the world the human being's liberty and God's liberty go together, and are not in opposition but in collaboration, if humanity respects what is specific to external nature and to its own nature".[3]

5. The biblical narrative of creation attests clearly the equality of human beings. All are sons and daughters of the same God and all are created "in the image of God". Genesis insists on the fact that both man and woman were created "in the image of God" (1:27). The dominion over the earth is given to all humanity without sexual discrimination.

6. In the Genesis story of creation God says: "It is not good that the man should be alone" (2:18). None of the animals was a fit companion to help the man (2:20). That is why God created woman. In the same story, giving birth, having children is presented as a blessing of God. Hence human beings were created by God as social beings, as beings made for

communion. This is an important aspect of being "in the image of God", because in the creation narrative God is presented as a plurality (Trinity) of Persons acting in perfect unity. The solidarity among human beings is therefore a grace of creation, and any destruction of fellowship is a sin against the nature of the human being.

7. While in the beginning the world was a "paradise", human sin inverted the values and death made its appearance. As a consequence of sin, the earth was to produce "weeds and thorns" (Gen. 3:18) and humanity would have to work hard to make the soil produce enough food for it (3:18).

Sin destroyed not only the harmony between man and nature, but also the unity of the human personality. In the interpretation of some church fathers, the dispersion of humanity over the earth was also a dispersion of personality, *ADAM* becoming *A*natole, *D*ysis, *A*rktos and *M*esembria, i.e. East, West, North and South.[4]

Sin destroyed human solidarity also. Immediately after they had sinned, Adam and Eve were accusing each other (Gen. 3:12-13) and later their son Cain killed his brother; Lamech (Noah's father) said that the Lord had cursed the ground. But in this situation humanity was not without hope. When sending Adam and Eve out of Eden, God promised them a Saviour (Gen. 3:15).

8. A theology of creation from the perspective of the history of salvation must take into account the messianic prophesies, which say many things about the destiny of God's world.

In these prophesies, the Messiah is presented as the re-creator of the world. His work is an action of reconciliation and peace. He is the peacemaker (*shilo*) (Gen. 49:10), and the prince of peace, (*shar shalom*) (Isa. 9:7, cf. Mich. 5:4). The messianic kingdom appears in the prophesies as a new Eden, with its original harmony (Isa. 11:5 ff., Ps. 72:3, 7, 8, 16; Mich. 4:4 etc.). In this new world, justice and peace embrace each other (Ps. 85:10), the second being the normal result of the first (Isa. 32:16-17).

On the other hand, this regeneration of the world needs the participation of human beings. According to the prophets, one of the specific actions of humanity in building the new world is disarmament. The men of the messianic age are presented as beating their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks (Isa. 2:4). The Lord will destroy their armaments (Zech. 9:10). The prophet Ezekiel speaks about using the abandoned weapons for firewood. The people — says this prophet — "will not need to take out of the field or cut down any out of

the forest, for they will make their fires of the weapons" (39:10). And that for seven years!

9. The promised saviour has come and objectively re-created humans and the world — *ta panta*, says St Paul (Col. 1:20).

But in the actualization of this reconciliation in Jesus Christ, humanity had its own mission. For example, Jesus gave his peace to us (John 14:27), but said also that we are to be peacemakers (Matt. 5:9). Nicolas Cabasilas says that if Christ made all things for peace, nothing is more important than peace for those who want to be disciples of Christ. The authentic Christians are to be — in the words of Cabasilas — *technitai tes eirenes*, "craftsmen of peace".[5]

In this field, humanity's mission is a very large one. It includes not only the restoration of its own harmony but also the restoration of all creation. St Paul underlines the pan-cosmic efficacity of the reconciliation in Jesus Christ (Col. 1:19-20). The creation in its integrity becomes, in Christ, an object of God's saving action. Jesus Christ is in the fullest sense the hope of the world because, objectively, the world and its future are not of the devil, but of Christ the Lord.[6] And the world itself has a feeling of its salvation in Christ.

But the world's destiny is closely related to the destiny of humanity. St Paul says that "the whole creation was groaning and waiting with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God" (Rom. 8:19-22). So, the world waits for humanity's conscientious effort by which Christ's re-creating grace will work in it.

10. The church is the new world on its way to the full transfiguration in the *eschaton*.

But the church is not the entire world. That is why the mission of actualizing Christ's justice and peace must not be limited to the members of the church. Christ's salvation works at different levels: at the individual level and at the level of the church, but also at the level of humanity as a whole, at the level of the world and of the universe. St Paul attests clearly that God's law is written also in the hearts of those who do not know or recognize Christ (Rom. 2:14-15). On the basis of this universal law, all humanity, including those who do not have the gospel as their norm of life, can and must work for an authentic humanity, for a new world.[7] Thus the church has to be open for collaboration with all people working for a better world.

* * *

In the contemporary world gravely exposed to the danger of self-destruction, the most important question to be resolved by theology is not: "How did the world come into being?", but: "What are the factors which can assure the continuity of the world?"

If today's science and technology used in an immoral way give birth to monsters, if the paradise created by God is in danger of becoming a desert, it is time for humanity to understand that the *dominium terrae* of Genesis 1:26.28 was falsely interpreted and practised.

Thus humanity is not the owner of the earth because, as the Psalmist says: "the world and all that is in it belong to the Lord; the earth and all who live on it are his" (Ps. 24:1). Thus human beings must respect the world as the Lord's property.

Adam and Christ are typical of the two alternative attitudes to the world. Adam used the world in an abusive, egotistic way. Jesus Christ accepted death for the life of the world.

With reference to the power of dominion over the world, our Saviour is the perfect model for all. He did not accept the devil's temptation to use his divine power with the goal of satisfying his need of food, or to gain over the world a domination which would in fact be of a demonic type (Matt. 4:1 ff.). By rejecting this temptation, Jesus chose the way of service and of sacrifice as his messianic way.

Thus in the cross of Christ, "a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles" (1 Cor. 1:23), we find the necessary wisdom for rightly using the power which technology has given us over nature. To be free from all selfishness in the use of this power is the only way to assure a future for our world.

In the Old Testament, the prophets many times insist that the future of their people is endangered by a false attitude of its leaders, relying on military strength — on horses, chariots and soldiers — with continuous oppression of the poor, of orphans and widows (Isa 1:17-23; 30:15 ff., Hos. 1:7; 14:4, etc.). These prophetic warnings are very topical now, when some of the leaders of the world think that the future of their nations can be assured by a more powerful military force. Such thinking must be eradicated from the world.

As Christians, we look hopefully to the future and our hope has its ground in God's love for his creation (John 3:16-17).

So on the part of God the world's future is predictable: it cannot be other than the best. But there is also an unpredictable factor, and that is humanity's liberty. The book of Genesis makes it clear that humanity can use its liberty against God's will and that human sin can introduce

into the world an infinite series of sufferings and the experience of death itself.

It is clearly, therefore, a most urgent task to domesticate this perverted liberty of humanity. In this field the church has an important objective for its activities. To make humanity adopt God's perspective of the world, so that the will of God "May be done on earth as it is in heaven": that is a mission that every disciple of Christ must assume.

NOTES

[1] St Ireneus, *Adversus Haereses*, 3,22,2, Migne, PG, VII, 958.
[2] St Basil the Great, *Hom. in Hexaem*, III,10, in *Scrieri* (in Romanian) trad. Pr. D. Fecioru, Bucharest, 1986, p.109.
[3] Pr. Prof. Dr Dumitru Staniloae, *Teologia Dogmatica Ortodoxa* (Orthodox Dogmatic Theology), Vol. I, Bucharest, 1978, p.359.
[4] Augustinus, *In Psalm 95*, No. 15, Migne, PL, XXXVII, 1236.
[5] Nicolas Cabasilas, *Life in Christ*, Migne, PG, CL, 676.
[6] H. Ridderboss, "La réconciliation d'après le Nouveau Testament", in *Perspectives reformées*, 1979, No. 1, p.43.
[7] Pr. Prof. Vasile Mihoc, "Elemente pentru o teologie crestina a pacii" (Elements for a Christian Theology of Peace), in *Mitropolia Ardealului*, XXX, 1985, Nos 11-12, pp.727ff.

God's Creation and Human Responsibility

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*This text is a slightly amended version of an article, "The Glory of the Creation — an Orthodox Contribution", that originally appeared in the periodical *Ostkirchliche Studien*, 34 (1985), 151-162.

At a time when ecological problems and environmental pollution are threatening to take on a catastrophic dimension, human awareness of the creation is becoming ever more urgent. And it is precisely human awareness of the problems of the environment today that is likewise the fundamental concern of theology and the church. Of course, the answer that theology and the church give and are able to give to these problems is not unrelated to God's revelation. Since theology in the light of revelation and the word of God speaks of the "glory" of the creation, it sometimes creates the impression that it is not paying enough attention to the problems of the day or at any rate has nothing up-to-date and valid to say. It seems to be faced with a dilemma. This dilemma, if applied to a similar problem, is described by a modern poet as follows:

> When they asked him what he had to say
> about Prague, My Lai or Belfast.
> he heaved a deep sigh and —
> preached to them the word of God.
>
> With the word of God
> he dodged the word of God
> With the word of God
> He dodged giving an answer.
>
> With the word of God
> He dodged responsibility.
> With the word of God
> He expressed himself beautifully.

We want to hear words
We want to hear answers
We want to hear responsible statements
We don't want a word specialist[1]

Can one with God's word really speak "gloriously" about creation? What exactly do we mean by this glory? What concrete reality does it refer to? Is such a way of speaking as "the glory of the creation" useful today for solving problems or must it be abandoned as outdated and unrealistic?

For any understanding and any evaluation of the creation from the Christian viewpoint two things are essential: an unqualified affirmation of divine revelation and the striving of searching humanity for the secret of God's truth, i.e., *its relation to God*. Without this relation, without total obedience to God and profound faith in his word, humanity will only lose its way amid the fragmentary findings of science and an unsilenceable agnosticism tending towards pessimism. For as Basil the Great said in his homilies on the Hexaemeron: "Astonishment at the greatest things does not become less on the discovery of the manner in which one of the paradoxical things happens. If it were otherwise, the simplicity (*to haploun*) of the faith must be stronger than the logical proofs."[2] In the "simplicity" of the faith in the word of God, humanity learns of and grasps the miracle of the creation and its own existence more directly than through scientific knowledge. Through faith in the word of God it does not evade God's word or an answer or even "responsibility" but lays down the premisses and yardsticks which imply the true answer and demand great and honest responsibility.

One of such premisses is the confession of "one God, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, all things visible and invisible". Everything created, all being, is the work of God. Even the existence of God cannot be grasped without God's relationship to the creation. The act of creation is an act of God's revelation and relation to the creation. The creation is the first and greatest act of God's power and wisdom. It is a free and benevolent action that not only reveals the Creator but also the "whence and whither" of the creation. The creation is the work of God and, as such, is to be distinguished from him and is utterly different. God's existence is also, it is true, included by us in the creation but is not dependent on the creation. On the other hand, while the creation has been from its beginning and still is dependent on God, this dependence is not to be taken as meaning that the creation is a fragment of God. The creation

came about neither in a pantheistic way nor as an emanation, and is therefore totally distinct from the Creator.

The creation and everything in the world was created *ex nihilo* by God. Matter is therefore no exception. God did not make the world out of pre-existing material, like (for example) the demiurge of Plato's philosophy. This doctrine of creation from nothing by the command of God rules out two conceptions: (1) that the world always existed, and (2) that it exists on its own or created itself. This doctrine is clearly stated in the first sentence of Genesis: "In the beginning God created heaven and earth" (Gen. 1:1). This "*en arkhe*", as rendered in the Septuagint is, according to St. John Chrysostom "sufficient (*ikanon*) to eliminate any other teaching and line of thought.[3] The creation from nothing is mentioned in 2 Maccabees 7:28: "I beg you, child, to look at the sky and earth; see all that there is, and know that God created it from nothing (*ex ouk onton*)." The New Testament teaches the same; "All things were made through him (the Word) and without the Word nothing was made that was made" (John 1:3).

Certainly, this passage from John confirms that all things were made by God, but it at the same time raises the question of the Son's participation in the creation. The participation of the Son and also of the Holy Spirit in the creation closely concerns the Christian teaching about God and thus, undoubtedly the deepest and most inaccessible secret of our faith. Of relevance here is certainly the phrase of Hippolytus that in respect of power and energy: "God is one."[4] The creation is the work of the triune God. It is the work of the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit. John of Damascus who consolidated the patristic tradition up to his time, comments: "Our God himself who is glorified in the trinity and unity created heaven and earth and all that is therein"; God the Father "creates by thought and the thought becomes fact and is supplemented by the Logos and completed by the Holy Spirit."[5]

The relative glory of the creation

The primary cause of the glory of the creation lies in its "whence" and its "whither". Two poles are involved between which all being moves and acquires its meaning. One pole — one viewpoint — is the act of creation i.e., the fact that the world was created by God. The other pole, the other viewpoint, is its final cause i.e., the goal that it has of being in communion with God.

The former, the divine origin of the creation in the sense of a gratuitous act of God automatically includes a positive valuation. It is not "evil" as

in the dualist systems (e.g., Manichaeanism) but God, the principle and origin of the good, from whom the creation comes. And since "every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights (James 1:17), the creation is fundamentally a good and perfect gift. It is good because it is an act of the perfect and unlimited freedom and goodness of God. God did not need the creation and was consequently free to create this world, or another, or none. And since God "cannot deny himself" (2 Tim. 2:13) — his goodness, holiness and love — God could not create an evil world.

In the first chapter of Genesis: the phrase "and God saw that it was good" is repeated seven times (1,4,10,12,18,25); the idea is summed up in the sentence: "God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (31). Because this assessment is to be treated as God's assessment, it has a certain transtemporality, permanence and generality. It means that the creation was very good and glorious from its beginning. From this angle, it is correct to speak of the glory of the creation as a fact. But this assessment of the creation as glorious and very good is qualified by the second viewpoint, i.e, the purpose assigned to it and especially the attainment of or failure to realise that purpose.

As regards the purpose (*causa finalis*) of the creation, one can say with Hermas that the world was created for the church.[6] According to this early church writer the church was called *presbytera* (older, worthier) "because it was created first of all... and for it (*dia tauten*) the cosmos was created". This means that, even before the creation of the world, God's intention was to establish through the creation a communion and an alliance. The *ekklesia* is indeed the eternal will of God to be in communion with the creation and to establish an alliance. This view of the creation permits — or rather "qualifies" — the description of the creation as very good beforehand. The creation is not only factually good but also good by reason of its purpose of uniting with God and being in communion. That God, salvation, is the final cause of the creation is often taught in Holy Scripture (God is the Alpha and Omega; cf. Rom. 11:36, 1 Cor. 15:24-28, Heb. 2:10) and commented on by the church fathers. Connected with this first purpose is a secondary purpose of the creation that is described in Gen. 1:26-30. I shall return to this later.

Here we are concerned with the glory of the creation in its actuality and chief purpose, its union with God. This chief goal as we know miscarried already in the lifetime of the first created beings; and in this fact theology sees an actual reduction in the glory of the creation. The glory of the creation is only relative, and sullied when seen from our angle. On this

point, one speaks in traditional theological terms of the "relative perfection of the world".[7] It is well-known that Abelard held the view that the created world is the best possible world that could be created.[8] This opinion contradicts not only the witness of scripture ("very good" and not "the best") but also the fact of there being evil in the world. Between the out-and-out optimistic view of Abelard and his followers and the pessimistic view that this world is the worst possible world obtains the church's scriptural doctrine in which the creation is very good. It is glorious from the creator's point of view and by reason of the goal assigned to it by God, its alliance with God. This immanent glory of the creation is qualified and imperfect.

Humanity as the crown of the creation

That humanity may be described as the special, secondary aim of the creation follows *inter alia* firstly from the act of its creation, secondly from its creation "in the image of God", and thirdly from God's words.

(a) If one considers the act of creating humanity, one quickly notices that the words "God created Man" (Gen. 1:27) deviate from scripture's way of speaking of the remainder of the creation ("Let there be light", "let there be this or that" (*genetheto*). The words "God created Man" mean — as John Chrysostom already noted — the same as the words: "let there be".[9] Yet he at the same time points out God's "greater providence for this creature", as Theodoretus stresses.[10] What is very striking in this context are the anthropomorphisms of Genesis 2 (7 and 21-22) which may be regarded as a sign of the special position of humanity in the creation. Of course, when the text says e.g. "from the hands of God", reference is not being made to parts of the body but to God's creative power.[11] This means that the description of the act of creation of Man in Genesis does not imply a fundamentally different act of creation. As with the rest of the creation, the origin of Man goes back to God's will and commandment, his creative power. In Genesis, no objectively verifiable cosmology is present. As regards humanity in particular the account of the creation emphasizes rather the beginning of the historical relationship between God and humanity. It shows that humanity from its creation is a special goal of the whole creation.

The human race is the last of God's creations and the only one with mental, logical powers given by God (cf. "breath of life"). Because it is God's creation and combines spirit and matter and so represents the crown of the creation, it is called *theion krama* (divine mixture) by Clement of Alexandria.[12] The Greek fathers in general used the concept in

Greek philosophy of "microcosm" for this, thereby best expressing the perfection of the reciprocal penetration of the spiritual and the sensual in the human being who is depicted as a microcosm uniting the spiritual and the sensual world. The glory of creation reaches its peak in the glory of the human race (Ps. 8:6ff.).

(b) This special status is even clearer from humanity's creation in the image of God (Gen. 1:26ff). From the Orthodox angle, the preposition "in" (the image: *kat' eikona*) is important in this context and must not be omitted. For some of the Greek Fathers, especially Athanasius the Great,[13] the importance of the preposition in this verse comes from the fact that Jesus Christ also is described in the same way (2 Cor. 4:4, Col. 1:15). Since the Christological dispute against Arianism, it has been rightly emphasized that God's Logos, Jesus Christ, is the only true and natural image of God because he is a being with the Father. Hence the demand that Man should not be called the image of God in the same way as Christ is, but that one should speak of human beings as creatures *in* the image of God. Thus, Man is created in the image of the original image, i.e., of the Logos. Humans become the image of God only in so far as they share in the true, natural image of God, in God's Logos.

But what is the content and precise sense of the human being described as a creature "in the image of God". The many attempts made in the history of theology to define the essence of human likeness to God (physical advantage; intellectual quality; reason, personality, mental superiority, etc.; rulership status; emanation of Yahwe's glory upon the human being, etc.) involve one in the danger of getting lost in a mass of detail. The explanation of the expression "in the image", i.e. that the human being was created according to Jesus Christ, the true image of God, indicates the right direction for investigating the essence of this natural property of the human being. It is a question of the Christological relation of humanity to its creation. Here, it is not so much an ontological question as to whether in the human being there is a divine element present, i.e., that something like God is in human beings; something that automatically relates the human being to God and brings about its salvation. This is certainly to be rejected because of the fundamental difference between the natures of the Creator and of the created. The Christological relation of the human being as image of Christ emphasizes the relationship, or (more concretely) God's loving and gracious relation to the human being. It is the natural property and condition in the human being for recognition of God and fellowship with God. It is the natural presence in the human being of a divine potential to seek salvation which

at the act of creation was infused as the specific content of the human being and became the principle of spiritual life in the human being. This divine potential in man is (according to Nikos Nissiotis) what established "the original bond between God and man".[14] It is what distinguishes the human being as a special, responsible centre in the creation and its glory. It is what was always demanded by Christ, its prototype. It is the potential Christological-soteriological destination of the human being that is not completed but needs to be developed. According to a homily attributed to St Basil the Great, "it is the principle and root of the good which I received in my nature from the beginning as part of the creation; but the process of ultimately becoming-like (*kath' homoiosin*) God I acquire through my works for the good and through my whole virtuous way of life."[15] God has left the "becoming-like-God" to be realized by humanity.

(c) In order that humanity (as man and woman) can reach this goal, God in the words of the creation story (Gen. 1:28) *blessed* them and said to them: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and *subdue* it and have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth...I hereby deliver to you every plant...every tree...for food". Accordingly the animal and vegetable kingdoms serve as food for humanity. That is a clear statement from God, which is often regarded as obsolete because of human failures and misuse. It is of importance for Christian theology, however, that the valuation of the creation by God ("God saw all that he had created and lo! it was very good") *follows* the above-mentioned order of God.

The natural relation between the human being and God, i.e. the living in communion with God, gives humanity the lordship over the creation because it is to imitate God in this condition, and deal with it lovingly as God deals with humanity. This implies the communion of love between all human beings and a just division of the earth and its goods. This natural paradisial relationship has not been realized. Hence, the glory of the creation is diminished.

The Creation "groans in sympathy"

What humanity since the disobedience and fall is living through and empirically experiencing is not natural but anti-natural. The original naturalness is lost through original sin. What does this mean? Where scholastic theology distinguished between *imago* and *similitudo* in the sense that *imago* cannot be lost but *similitudo* can be lost, and the Reformation on the basis of the Augustinian conception of humanity as a *massa damnata*[16] and the identification of *imago* and *similitudo* was

forced to speak of the loss of *imago*, the old church (and hence the Orthodox doctrine) dissociated itself from these two standpoints. Basil the Great speaks of two groups of divine gifts: (a) the gifts already given (creation in God's image, noetic and ethical powers, dominion over nature, harmony with God, the environment and oneself, etc.): and (b) the greater gifts that were to come under the promise (immortality, reward for righteousness, communion with God, etc.).[17] To the question as to what the first-created and hence humanity have lost by the Fall, Orthodox theology gives the answer that not only the promised gifts were lost but there was also a darkening and weakening of the existing natural powers and God's gifts.

In relation to our topic this means that the human being, through original sin, wilfully lost the natural life, i.e life in accordance with God's gracious decree in the company of and proximity to God. Thus there occurred a deviation from the natural, a "loss of good things, alienation from God, confusion of statutes, collapse of all that is good in life".[18] Human harmony with God, the environment and itself gave way to disharmony, enmity, egoism, exploitation. The glory of the creation and of humanity was reduced by original sin. The rule of spiritual power in the human being over the flesh and its demands collapsed. The loving relationship between human beings was to a large extent replaced by egoism. Rule over nature was corrupted into exploitation and destruction of the natural environment. The righteousness of the original condition gave way to the exploitation and the condition of *homo hominis lupus*. Humanity departed from God and with it the whole of creation was impoverished. This is what St Paul was thinking of when he said: "The whole of the creation has until now been groaning and suffering with it" (Rom. 8:22). Paul says "until now" and means his own time. After nearly two millenia we can repeat the same phrase and say "until now" without qualification in relation to today. Has the reversal hoped for and believed in by Paul as regards the suffering of humanity and the creation through the salvation given in Jesus Christ not taken place or only partially?

What is the cause of this? To a poet this is simply because of the difficulty of the goal of serving God:

> A person who already as a little Christian
> knows what he was created for:
> 'To serve God here on earth
> And to be one day eternally blessed!'
> Forgets after many a year
> The goal that was so easy
> Only seemed easy: it is hard to serve God.[19]

A theologian will certainly agree with the poet up to a point, but cannot fully share this view. It is not so much the difficulty of serving God as the lack of determination to serve God at all, to submit to the mystery of the faith and of Christ's saving work. Christians have paid too little attention to the context of the passage from St Paul quoted above, and even less have they followed it. Paul writes:

> I consider that the sufferings of this present time *are not worth comparing* with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the *glorious liberty of the children of God*...We are saved, but in hope. Now, hope that is seen is not hope. How can one hope for something that is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it in patience" (Rom. 8:18-25).

The glory of the creation and God's glorification

The glory of the creation is relative and limited, among other things because it has a beginning and an end. It is subject to "transitoriness". But at the same time it shares or is to share in the "glory of the children of God". While it longingly awaits the revelation of the children of God, it lives in the hope that it also is being freed from perdition. This does not mean that the creation will cease to be transitory. The creation obtains its freedom from slavery through its service to the glory of the children of God. This glory is not a present one but eschatological. The sufferings of the present time are to be measured against and compared with this eschatological glory, and then they are seen to be insignificant. The eschatological glory appears in a fragmentary way in the lives of human beings on earth. It is most easily perceived where people become, through the witness of the Spirit, children and heirs of God, joint heirs of Christ. People become joint heirs of Christ "provided they suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him" (Rom. 8:17).

The suffering of Christ comes from God's love for humanity. In the indescribable secret of God becoming flesh "Christ brings each of you created creatures" (in the words of a Christmas hymn) "a thanksgiving. The angels bring a hymn, the sky a star, the wise men gifts, the shepherds astonishment, the earth the cave, the desert the crib and we the virgin mother" (Stichiron of the Christmas Vespers).[20] This makes it clear that in the incarnation the ontologically objective restoration of the original glory of the whole creation, especially of humanity, took place.

By reason of the Logos of God becoming man, we human beings are saved — but as yet in hope. We are saved by suffering with him and repeating in the sacramental life what he did and suffered for us. "We are saved" thus means that we can and may hope for our ultimate salvation before God.

Life in the hope of salvation is a shadowy participation imbued with hope of participation in the eschatological glory. It appears most clearly in liturgical life, in the church's liturgy glorifying God. Just as, at the Word becoming Man the whole of the creation participated (as God intended), in the divine liturgy our gifts of bread and wine, our faith, our prayer, our pure hearts are offered. We bring to God the things that are his from those who are his (*ta Sa ek ton Son*) and we receive them back by being able to sing after the communion: "We have seen the true light, we have received the heavenly Spirit, we have found the true faith by praying to the indivisible Trinity for this has saved us." In the church's liturgy and especially in the invocation of the Holy Spirit and communion, our eschatological association with God is anticipated and the glory of God is partially visible. The creation participates therefore *hic et nunc*, i.e. in the liturgy glorifying God, in the glory of God, who will however be fully evident and seen only at the *eskhaton*. "Now we see in a mirror darkly but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully. So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor. 13:12-13).

From the view presented here that the glory of the creation is now and here dependent on the glorification of God, on the salvation given by him, and on the hope of ultimately seeing the glory of God, it must not be assumed that a fatalistic attitude can be taken to concrete social and environmental problems. For apart from faith and hope, love is decisive for the present. Love is placed first of the three in the passage from Paul because it directly relates to the present. Faith and hope could be an excuse for lack of love. But love is the touchstone of true faith and life-giving hope. A loving approach to the social and environmental problems of our age (hunger, war, poverty, anxiety, isolation, environmental pollution, etc.) imbued with faith and hope in our salvation is the path towards a restoration of the glory of the creation and of humanity. From the Christian viewpoint, a purely humane activism is not, from the Christian angle, the prerequisite to a solution of the problem; what is needed is an unconditional, loving acceptance and incorporation of the problem in the ecclesiastical reality of the true faith given by Christ and of the well-founded hope, i.e of the ecclesial hope that Jesus Christ will

enable his church, which he has loved and given himself for, to appear gloriously before him "without spot or wrinkle or other blemish" (Eph. 5:27).

NOTES

[1] *P. Karner & E. Fuchs*, Texte für grüne Christen, Herder-Verlag, Wien/Freiburg/Basel, 1982, p.79.
[2] *Basilii*, Hom. 1 in *Hexaemeron*, 10: PG 29, 25 A.
[3] *Joan Chrysostomi*, Hom. 2 in *Genesin*, 4:PG, 53, 30.
[4] *Hippolyti, Contra haer.* Noeti, 8: PG, 10, 816 AB. Hinsichtlich der Beteiligung des Sohnes an der Schöpfung "The Concept of Creation in Saint Athanasius", in F.L. Cross (ed.), *Studia Patristica*, Vol. VI, Berlin, 1962, pp.36-57.
[5] Joan Damasceni, *De fide orthodoxa*, 19: PG 94, 880 A. 16: PG, 94, 865A. See also Gregorii, *Oratio*, 38,9: PG, 36, 320D.
[6] Hermae, Pastor. Visio II,4,1: *Sources chrétiennes* 53, 96.
[7] P. Trempelas, *Dogmatique de l'Eglise orthodoxe catholique*, translation P. Dumont, Chevetogne, 1966, pp.400f.
[8] P. Abelardi, *Theol. Christ*, III, 3: *Corpus Christianorum*, 12, 195. V, 6: *Corpus Christianorum*, 12, 349.
[9] Joan Chrysostomi, Hom. 13 in *Genesin*, 2: PG 53, 107.
[10] Theodoreti, *Haeretic. fabul. Compendium*, 5,9: PG 83, 447 C.
[11] Theodoreti, Haeretic. fabul. Compendium, 5,9: PG 83, 447BC.
[12] Clem. Alex., *Paedag* 2,2: Stählin (GCS) I, 168, 8.
[13] Athanasii, *Contra Gentes*, 1,2: PG 25, 81.
[14] N. Nissiotis, *Die Theologie der Ostkirche im ökumenischen Dialog*, Stuttgart, 1968, p.40.
[15] [Basilii], *De hominis structura*, 1: PG 30, 32 C.
[16] Augustini, *Sermo* 26,12.13: PG 38/I, 201. *De civ. Dei* 21,12: CSEL 40/II, 541, 12.
[17] Basilii, *Hom. in illud*, Attende tibi ipsi, 6: PG 31, 212 A — 213 A.
[18] Basilii, *In princ. Proverbiarum*, 6: PG 31, 385 BC.
[19] P. Karner & E. Fuchs, *Texte für grüne Christen*, p.88.
[20] Cf. also P. Christou, "I prosfora tis ktiseos", in *Festschrift für den Metropoliten von Chalkedon Meliton*, Saloniki, 1977, pp.539-546.

Peace and Justice: Theological Foundations

VLASSIOS PHIDAS

The basis of Orthodox anthropology

The crucial question is: what peace and what justice are we going to discuss? The theme has many aspects. Nevertheless, a purely Orthodox approach to the question is not possible without reference to the mystery of Christ's incarnation on the one hand, and the mystery of the church on the other, i.e. apart from Orthodox Christology and ecclesiology, because the mystery of Christ's incarnation — continued in the mystery of the church — is at the base of all Christian anthropology, notwithstanding the well-known confessional differences. The patristic tradition clearly shows that the ontological interpenetration of the mystery of Christ and the mystery of the church provided a firm ecclesiological foundation for Orthodox anthropology since the exclusive nature of the ecclesiology of the Body of Christ precludes in the Orthodox tradition any tendency to a dichotomy between the mystery of Christ and the mystery of the church. Hence, the ecclesial community identifying itself with the one Body of Christ, shows forth the identity of Christ and the church in the history of salvation.

This Pauline and patristic theology followed a different path in the Western tradition, putting forward progressively the idea of a more or less clear distinction between Christ and his church. Western theology emphasized rather the lordship of Christ over the church, which weakened the Christocentric ontology of the church. This tendency underlies Protestant theology, which has developed a strict distinction between Christ and the visible church, and has minimized or forgotten the content of the patristic tradition regarding the ontological identity

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Extracted from "Peace and Justice in the Orthodox Experience" by Prof. Vlassios Phidas, University of Athens (1989)

between Christ and the church. Hence, the church becomes a mere spiritual society of true believers; and this is why the idea of Christ's "mystical body" cannot be applied to the visible church and excludes any ontological reality from the mystical unity of Christ and its members.

The idea of the "mystical body" in the Protestant tradition becomes simply a moral union in the absolute and transcendent lordship of Christ over his church; that is why it has tended to reduce the sacramental realism of the church to a mere temporary occasionalism. The Protestant tendency has profoundly influenced the theological tradition of the Roman Catholic Church, though the latter has begun to favour a theological reinterpretation of its ecclesiological teaching on the "body of Christ" based on its patristic tradition, in spite of evident hesitations.

These different ecclesiological presuppositions have a profound effect on the confessional specificity of all ecclesial experience, because any doctrinal differentiation on the concept of the "body of Christ" undermines the very tradition of Christian anthropology which underlies the content of all Christian spirituality. The confessional differences in the doctrine on the sacraments and on sacramental experience are sufficient evidence of this point, since they profoundly affect all the main aspects of Christian living and spirituality. It is true that one cannot say that by and large the spirituality of the Western Christian world has been separated from any notion of the patristic doctrine of the "body of Christ", since one must not overlook the fruitful trends in Western spirituality derived directly or indirectly from the theology of the mystical body of Christ.

In Orthodox spirituality, the experience of belonging to the one body of Christ is not simply one of the sources; it is the only source of Christian life and spirituality: hence, the church which is the body of Christ in the history of salvation, is ontologically identified with the sole source of Christian spirituality, which is Jesus Christ himself. It is true that the life of the body of Christ is solely the life infused by Christ; but it is equally true that in Orthodox ecclesiology Christ is identified with his church. As Bossuet said, "Jesus Christ is in his church, doing all things through his church in the same way as the church is in Jesus Christ, doing everything with Jesus Christ". This underlying "identity" of Christ and his church is the foundation of the Christocentric ontology of the ecclesiological doctrine of the Orthodox Church which depends on the incarnation of the Word of God.

This body of the ecclesial community is regarded as an organic body in which "we though many are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another" (Rom. 12:5). In this ecclesial body, the variety

in membership and the complementarity of their functions in no way dissolve the unity and uniqueness of the body, since "in one body we have many members and all the members do not have the same function" (Rom. 12:4). The mystery of Christ's incarnation thus reveals the underlying unity of ecclesiology and anthropology.

Recapitulated in Christ's humanity is the whole of humanity which, by the incarnation becomes the body of Christ. Hence, the Word Incarnate is not simply one man in humanity but the Man who carries in his body the whole of humanity: "He became man", in the words of St. Gregory the Theologian, "for the sake of mankind as a whole wounded by sin, so as to destroy all condemnation and save humanity as a whole, becoming man for us so that we may become gods for him (*Oratio* 40). It is very characteristic of Christ that by his incarnation he linked himself to the social conditions of the Jewish people; this feature is not, however, an essential part of the mystery of the incarnation since Jesus Christ united himself in his human nature with all human beings. Hence, in the new reality in Christ, "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

Acting through motivating the faithful

The Orthodox Church has always worked in this direction. Its liturgical experience, preaching and pastoral work are directed to motivating its members to show forth its teaching and to defend the fundamental rights of Man which are the substance of the dignity of the human person. Its doctrine is derived directly from the tradition of the fathers which emphasizes the communal Christocentric conception of the lives of the faithful in society. In liturgical life the individual Christian with all the other members of the congregation brings about the fullness of the local ecclesial body since all persons or social reality reach full bloom in the joint eucharistic experience of Jesus Christ's work and salvation.

Hence, all pastoral or social work of the church in society is carried on through the Christian and his or her liturgical experience in the congregation. The Christian is the absolute ideal of the social mission of the Orthodox Church, since he or she is both an organic part of the ecclesial body and a member of local society, and thus becomes the bearer of the Christian teaching for correcting or transforming oppressive situations in society. This openness is absolutely necessary to any understanding of present-day mentalities if we are to disclose the thirst for peace and justice that they contain, and to find new ways for more active commitment by the ecclesial body in the service of peace and justice.

It is in that spirit that the Third Panorthodox Preconcilar Conference (1986) adopted the following declaration: "A common recognition of the eminent value of the human person can make wider collaboration possible in this domain. In this connection, advantage may also be taken of the experience of the Orthodox churches. The local Orthodox churches in close collaboration with the peace-loving faithful of other world religions consider it their duty to work for peace on earth and the establishment of fraternal relations between peoples. The Orthodox churches are called upon to contribute to joint effort and collaboration between religions, and thereby combat fanaticism anywhere; in this way they work for reconciliation between peoples, the triumph of the values represented by freedom and peace in the world, service to humanity today regardless of race or religion..."

It must be admitted that the Orthodox Church was not accustomed to seeing its responsiblity for political peace and social justice in the world in those terms. The Orthodox tradition on church-state relations imposes canon-law restrictions on any sort of political commitment. The application of the canon-law restrictions has often been interpreted by the temporal power in a rather narrow way as regards the church's mission in society. Any intervention by the church was liable to be described as interference in political matters incompatible with its mission. Hence the Orthodox Church's sensitivity in relation to the temporal power weakened its direct intervention in the social order, in spite of its awareness that the gospel message embraces all aspects of social life.

Nevertheless, while respecting the sensitiveness of the temporal power, the Orthodox Church must address directly the ecclesial body which may operate at all levels of social and political life. If the social action of the church is misinterpreted, there is no restriction on the members of the ecclesial body who may and must commit themselves in all areas of social life to insist on respect for peace, justice and the rights of man. The Christian citizen must take part in political life and stand up for the promotion of Christian values in society. A motivation of the faithful is essential for all the Orthodox Church's social action.

Towards greater co-operation

The function of the ecclesial body and the spiritual experience of its members in faith and prayer are no longer a sufficient contribution by the Orthodox Church in the face of the great problems of today. The mad competition in the production of nuclear weapons is becoming a crime against humanity and an aggression against the saving work of the

church. To avoid frightful catastrophes in the future, the Orthodox Church must commit itself to open co-operation with national and international institutions and organizations.

Such commitment may help to enrich the peace-making experience of its ecclesial body, and at the same time awaken the world's conscience for building peace here and now. The motivation of the ecclesial body in this commitment to peace at the local and world levels may inspire the international declarations with the dynamism and experience of the Christian faith.

I have chosen to conclude this statement with the words of the excellent conclusion to a document of the Third Preconcilar Panorthodox Conference (1986):

> We, Orthodox Christians, have — by reason of the fact that we have had access to the meaning of salvation — a duty to fight against disease, misfortune, fear; because we have had access to the experience of peace we cannot remain indifferent to its absence from society today; because we have benefited from God's justice, we are fighting for fuller justice in the world and for the elimination of all oppression; because we daily experience God's mercy, we are fighting all fanaticism and intolerance between persons and nations; because we continually proclaim the incarnation of God and the divinization of man we defend human rights for all individuals and all peoples; because we live God's gift of liberty, thanks to the redemptive work of Christ, we can announce more completely its universal value for all individuals and peoples; because, nourished by the body and blood of our Lord in the holy eucharist, we experience the need to share God's gifts with our brothers and sisters, we have a better understanding of hunger and privation and fight for their abolition; because we expect a new earth and new heavens where absolute justice will reign, we fight here and now for the rebirth and renewal of the human being and society.

This means that the Orthodox Church must:

a) renew the peace-making function of its ecclesial body at the local and worldwide levels in the spirit of its patristic tradition;
b) awaken pastoral concern for the defence of peace and justice by prayer, preaching and liturgical experience;
c) motivate members of the ecclesial body to commit themselves more actively to promoting awareness for peace and justice in their own society and world society;
d) develop a spirit of genuine cooperation with all institutional organisations at the national and international levels working to awaken the world's conscience for the defence of peace, justice and human rights.

Biblical Understanding of Justice and Peace

PAUL TARAZI

Shalom and justice in the Old Testament

The setting of the Old Testament is the ancient Near East where the notion of creation is expressed in the mythological imagery of the establishment of an orderly realm over and against the ever-active chaotic powers. This is reflected in the link each deity had with a certain city whose king was the representative of that deity. The city was the earthly realm of the *politeia*, which corresponded to the heavenly order, realm of the *ktisis*. Every city was always maintained against ever-active powers of different kinds trying to upset the order of the *politeia* and aiming at its collapse. Against this ancient Near Eastern background, *shalom*[1] meant the harmonious order that maintained the created world as well as the socio-political life of the city. And since the established order in the heavenly and the earthly abodes was expressed in the secured throne of the deity or the king, the sitting on the throne of the deity or the king amounted to the establishment of this harmonious order, i.e. to the implementation of *shalom*.

The interconnection between God's enthronement or reign and his *shalom* is clearly shown in the following instances:

(1) "The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord sits enthroned as king for ever. May the Lord give strength to his people! May the Lord bless his people with peace!" (Ps. 29:10-11).

(2) "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good tidings, who publishes peace, who publishes good tidings of good, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, Your God reigns." (Isa. 52:7; also 55:12; 66:12). The same imagery occurs in the apocalyptic text of Zechariah. 9:9-10 where God is viewed as extending the peace of his rule over the entire world: "Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he ... and he shall command peace to the nations; his

dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth."

(3) In the same Deutero-Isaianic context of Jerusalem's restoration, the new era of "peace" is likened to the post-diluvian new order of creation: "For this is like the days of Noah to me: as I swore that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so I have sworn that ...my steadfast love shall not be removed from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed ..." (Isa. 54:9-10).

This reality — self-evident for the ancient Near Easterners — leads to the conclusion that it is solely God who establishes *shalom* (Isa. 26:12) and thus can take it away: "For thus says the Lord (to Jeremiah): Do not enter the house of mourning, or go to lament, or bemoan them, for I have taken away my peace from this people, says the Lord, my steadfast love and mercy" (Jer. 16:5; also 12:12; and 8:15 in conjunction with 33:6). The other side of the coin is the further conclusion that *shalom* cannot be brought about through human endeavours: "When anguish comes, they will seek peace, but there shall be none. Disaster comes upon disaster, rumour follows rumour; they seek a vision from the prophet, but the law perishes from the priest, and counsel from the elders. The king mourns, the prince is wrapped in despair, and the hands of the people of the land are palsied by terror. According to their way I will do to them, and according to their own judgments I will judge them; and they shall know that I am the Lord" (Ez. 7:25-27).

Even more: when God has decided to take away his peace, then anyone who speaks for it or endeavours to establish it is not acting on God's behalf: "Then I said: 'Ah, Lord God, behold, the prophets say to them, You shall not see the sword, nor shall you have famine, but I will give you assured peace in this place.' And the Lord said to me: 'The prophets are prophesying lies in my name; I did not send them, nor did I command them or speak to them. They are prophesying ... the deceit of their own minds'" (Jer. 14:13-14; also 23:17). The proof given for their deceit is that none has stood in God's council (23:18, 22) where he is seated on the throne as almighty king (1 Kings 22:19-23; Isa. 6:1-7).[2]

Shalom thus is a uniquely divine prerogative since it is related to the uniquely divine act of creation. Similarly, within the human realm, it is uniquely a ruler's action since it is the other facet of the establishment of the kingdom whose expression is the city as *politeia*. Thus, from the perspective of those who are neither God nor king, *shalom* cannot be but something attained or realized. It is the reality itself of creation within which we exist and within which we act. In other words, *shalom* is neither

a target nor a goal; rather it is the basis or the premise of our own being and existence. This mythological background can be easily seen in Psalm 72 where nature itself is linked to the royal person and function:

> May he judge thy people with righteousness , and thy poor with justice! Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness! May he defend the cause of the poor of the people ... May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth! ... May prayer be made for him continually, and blessings invoked for him all the day! May there be abundance of grain in the land; on the tops of the mountains may it wave; may its fruit be like Lebanon; and may men blossom forth from the cities like the grass of the field! May his name endure for ever ...(vv.2-4, 6, 15-17).

A closer look at the creation and/or enthronement psalms will show however that the throne bears another connotation, namely that of *mishpat* (equitable judgment). The "new song to the Lord" (Ps. 96:1) runs thus: "Say among the nations, The Lord reigns! Yea, the world is established, it shall never be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity" (v. 10); "The Lord reigns; let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad! Clouds and thick darkness are about him; *righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne* (97:1-2).[3] What is said of God applies also to the enthroned king. The supplication on his behalf includes the following: "In your majesty ride forth victoriously for the cause of truth and to defend the right ... Your divine throne endures for ever and ever. Your royal sceptre is a sceptre of equity; you love righteousness and hate wickedness;" (45:4, 6-7a) whereas his own prayer is: "Give the king thy justice, O God, and thy righteousness to the royal son! May he judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with justice! ... May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor! ... In his days may righteousness flourish, and peace abound, till the moon be no more!" (72:1,3,7).

The last passage clearly views the notion of *mishpat* as virtually synonymous with that of *shalom*.

This full parallelism between *mishpat, sedaqah* (righteousness), and *emet* (truth) on the one hand, and *shalom* on the other, is a common *topos* of the prophetic writings: "O that you had hearkened to my commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea" (Isa. 48:18); "The way of peace they know not, and there is no justice in their path; they have made their roads crooked, no one who goes in them knows peace" (59:8); "I will make

your overseers peace and your taskmasters righteousness" (60:17); "These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another, render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace" (Zech. 8:16; also v. 19). It is said of the hoped-for perfect king: "Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and for evermore" (9:7). That this view is inherent not to the person of a particular king as such but rather to the notion of kingship, can be seen in the post-exilic period when priesthood became "enthroned", as it were, into the role of leadership (Zech. 4: 11-14; 6:12-14). The priests are reminded that "my (God's) covenant with him (Levi) was a covenant of life and peace ... True instruction was in his mouth, and no wrong was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and he turned many from iniquity" (Mal. 2:5-6).

But if *shalom* is the basis, the premise, the prerequisite of any existence and thus for any activity within the realm of creation, the question arises as to the sense in which the notions of *mishpat* and *shalom* appear to be so inextricably related in the aforementioned texts. Actually, it is *shalom* which seems to be dependent on *mishpat* and not vice-versa. Indeed, "the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust for ever" (Isa. 32:17). The only possible answer is that justice forms the texture itself of shalom: the throne upon which God (the king) sits, thus creating the world (the city), is none other than the throne of his *mishpat* (justice). In other words, sitting on the throne is the same as "sitting or governing in justice." This is precisely what allowed Amos to question the "peace", i.e. the economic prosperity, of the kingdom of Israel under Jeroboam II and to brand it as a mere house of cards. The king's throne was not manufactured out of justice; *consequently*, peace was only apparent, and the fall of Samaria was only a matter of time.

The case of Amos — as well as of other prophets — brings to light a basic dissimilarity between the kingship of the deity and that of the king, namely, that a deity enthrones itself — or is enthroned by the supreme deity — whereas the king is enthroned by the deity. Thus the reign of a particular king depends upon the satisfaction of the diety he is representing. Put otherwise, the unconditionality of God's kingship is evident: if God were not ruling in justice, his kingdom — the creation — would have collapsed; the mere existence of the created world is a proof that God is performing his "kingly" duty. In the king's case however, the reality of

the matter is not self-evident: cities come and go, kingdoms rise and collapse, within the realm of God's creation.[4] In other words, whereas God's *shalom* is *ipso facto* textured with justice and therefore self-supporting, the king's *shalom* is granted to him to be implemented, the channel of this implementation being *mishpat*. The king is offered peace, but justice is required of him.

Yet, being a gift, peace cannot be produced by the king, but rather *maintained* by him as an *oikonomos* manages the property of his master, to use New Testament parable terminology. Unlike God, the king is essentially under judgment, yet not on the basis of peace, but of justice. In the biblical view then, one may not from the human perspective speak of peace as one does of justice: peace may not function in our debates except as the premise or basis on which we are to implement justice. Peace cannot be but God's peace.

The prophets learned well that lesson in their intercourse with God's word, and cried "justice" when almost everyone else was crying "peace". The most pro-kingship among them, Isaiah, tried even to influence the actual kings of Judah to follow the right path, hoping that real peace, God's peace, would continue to hover over Judah, but in vain. And yet, his realism did not throw him into despair, but rather made him project his hope into a future time when God himself would implement justice, and thus usher in everlasting peace in Judah through his anointed one, another David (chs. 9,11). However, future experiences proved such a hope unattainable. Starting with God's real peace, i.e. anchored in justice, Jeremiah and Ezekiel criticized kings and leaders and prophesied the collapse of Jerusalem itself, the city of God himself, and together with Deutero-Isaiah after them, they looked beyond the new David for direct intervention by God himself; they looked for God's kingship itself.

It is this awaiting of God's kingdom within Judah (and Israel) that emerges as the heart of exilic and post-exilic prophesy. In its turn such a hope became, with the advent of the priestly leadership, a possibility within a theocracy (Haggai, Zechariah); but this new avenue also proved to be an impasse when the new Jerusalem betrayed profound aspects of injustice (Trito-Isaiah, Deutero-Zechariah). And it is within the work of these two prophets that we have the first clear expression of apocalypticism which looked for an absolute rule of God that goes beyond the boundaries of Judah-Israel and encompasses the entire creation, i.e., an immediate rule of God within the created realm without the intermediary of an earthly king.

The New Testament understanding

Apocalypticism received a powerful impetus during the Maccabean revolt as well as during the aborted attempt to implement this "kingdom" under Hasmonean rule. Yet, the novelty of the movement did not allow it to dislodge fully the messianism which remained influential, especially due to the reaction towards the Roman hegemony. Indeed, apocalypticism had an element of escapism and unrealism. It is Jesus and his message that turned the tables in favour of apocalypticism . Refusing to endorse messianism, Jesus proclaimed the imminence of God's rule and acted on the basis that it was already there! This explains a striking feature of the gospels: peace is assumed as an objective reality pervading our world.

Luke especially stresses the actuality of God's rule: there is peace on earth because God is seated in glory in his heavenly abode (Luke 2:14); whereas at his entrance into Jerusalem Jesus, as earthly king, is hailed in conjunction with God's kingship in heaven: "Blessed be the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" (19:38). The latter point is enhanced in Jesus' words of sorrow immediately thereafter : "Would that even today you knew the things that make for *peace*! But now they are hid from your eyes." (v.42). On the other hand, and precisely because God's kingship is already here and he is seated on his throne of justice, his peace is perceived as a judgment with a sword's cutting edge! (Matt. 10:34, Luke 12:51).

The fact that the peace brought about by Jesus is to be understood eschatologically is made clear in John. On the one hand, the peace he promises is strictly his and is to be radically differentiated from that offered by the world (14:27); indeed, it is given to the disciples while the world is offering them unrest and tribulation (16:33). On the other hand, this *eirene* is granted at Jesus' resurrection (20:19, 21, 26), the eschatological divine act *par excellence*.[5]

From the Pauline literature we also gather that peace:

a) is essentially eschatological since it is directly linked to the person of the Spirit (Rom. 8:6; 14:17, 19; 15:13; Eph. 4:3) and it entails the ultimate destruction of Satan (Rom. 16:20) who epitomizes the chaotic elements working against God's enthronement and rule;
b) is present here and now only in Christ (Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:14-17; Col. 3:15) or his gospel (Eph. 6:15; Col. 3:16).

The centrality of the notion of peace in the New Testament which witnesses to the realization of God's rule in Jesus Christ is paradoxically reflected in the relative infrequency of the term *eirene* in this literature. Indeed, because the ultimate peace is implemented and the creation is

firmly, fully, and harmoniously established, the stress on justice and righteousness is all the more enhanced. Suffice it here to point out that the three instances where it refers to God or Christ as "king" are found within a context where the central point is God's judgment. Moreover, in two cases (Matt. 18 and 25) the criterion for judgment is the neighbour as was the case in the Old Testament prophetic teaching. In the third (Matt. 22), it is the non-readiness of the individual who does not realize that the banquet to which he is invited amounts to his last chance for sharing in God's kingdom, i.e. peace.[6]

Concluding observations

Some of the conclusions that can be drawn from the investigation regarding the way in which Orthodox Christians are to approach the timely concerns of justice and peace are the following:

1. The biblical notion of *shalom/eirene* does not correspond to the contemporary connotation given to this term. Today peace means either absence of war between two or more countries, or quietness within a particular country. *Shalom/eirene* includes such aspects, but it is not limited to them. Moreover, peace is something to work for as well as a stepping-stone for greater realizations whereas *shalom/eirene* is granted as well an ultimate status. Put otherwise, while peace is somehow a neutral situation, *shalom/eirene* is a positive notion. And theologically speaking, the former is an element in the human kingdom, the latter is the kingdom of God itself. Consequently, if we are addressing here the issue of peace, we may not forget this reality of ourselves out of which we are speaking. This reality is expressed in our gathering as "church" at the eucharist. There, not only God's kingdom functions as a premise, but also its other facet is *eirene*, as is clear from the beginning of the holy liturgy.

2. Consequently, it is starting from "there ahead," from God's kingdom, that we are to approach the issue of peace itself. And such an approach cannot but be critical. In other words, we are not to let ourselves be carried away in talking about peace, but rather, *and before anything else*, view it critically with an "eirenic" eye. The reason is that — as human history has well shown time and again — peace, within as well as without a country, is often an euphemism for *status quo* which, in its turn, is often akin to what Amos has so drastically criticized in the times of Jeroboam II, i.e. a state of injustice towards and oppression of "the poor and the needy" to whom God's kingdom is also, if not primarily, addressed. Still, a critical "viewing" of peace is not — as is often done among us Orthodox — to be expressed in a condescending manner from

the outside, as one who has been "magically raptured" into a platonic "wonderland". Christians are neither mythologically nor magically snatched away from this world, but rather, *in faith*, standing within this world and as part of it, under the aegis of the crucified and — for them — risen Christ. It is indeed the *entire* world, Christian and non-Christian alike, that is carried up towards God in the eucharistic *anaphora*.[7]

3. A non-condescending and more realistically involved attitude towards the world, our world, can be realized only if we remember that it is *as baptized* that we gather eucharistically. At the eucharist the baptized do experience God's kingdom, but only proleptically, in a foretaste. The eucharistic bread gives them the necessary energy to continue *in this world* which cannot give them, *as baptized*, the food they need. And this energy is given to them so that they can witness in their daily life, *in this world*, to the *shalom/eirene* of the kingdom, i.e., witness to the fact that *this world*, in spite of all appearances, is, in Christ, already the creation of God enthroned and against which the chaotic powers can do nothing. How do the Christians make such a witness? By trying to enact through word *and deed* — even at the cost of their lives — the only proof that God indeed reigns, namely: his justice. And since such justice cannot be realised here and in all its completeness, their endeavour in this field is to be endless. It is indeed in a context of God's universal reign over creation, where sun and rain are indiscriminately for the righteous and the evil, that the most radical command is given: "You, therefore, must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matt. 5:48). From the perspective of God's kingdom, the Christian commitment cannot be for peace, i.e. human peace, but solely for justice.

4. But what about peace, human peace, in such times when nuclear armaments and ecological irresponsibility threaten in an unprecedented way the very existence of our planet? I am fully convinced that the answer to such a dilemma is not to be found in the biblical notion of *shalom/eirene*, simply because it *cannot* be found there. For the planet earth which merely continues its course and gives priority to human peace over God's justice hardly reflects the reality that "God reigns". The answer with which the Bible can help us out of the dilemma of facing the possible annihilation of our world lies in the so-called "Wisdom literature." Wisdom is virtually the only Old Testament notion that is not only not exclusively biblical, but also basically human, i.e. that functions *exactly in the same way* throughout the realm of creation *disregarding* the Old Testament message.[8] It is by appealing to wisdom, which is neither theist nor atheist, neither Christian nor non-Christian, neither Eastern nor Western, neither Southern nor

Northern, neither 20th century nor pre-20th century, neither exclusively divine nor exclusively human — it is by appealing to this wisdom that Christians, without compromising their commitment to the *shalom* and the *mishpat* connected with it, will, hopefully, be able *as humans*, i.e., *together with* — and only together with — the rest of humanity, to save our common planet from catastrophy.

5. That approach has more to it than is apparent. On the one hand, the reality of God's reign in Christ proves from the Christian perspective that our world *is* experiencing God's *shalom/eirene* and thus cannot be destroyed; consequently, commitment to Christ renders Christian involvement in the preservation of our planet a "theological" *must*. On the other hand, the fact that such an involvement cannot be except in complete togetherness with non-Christians helps Christians to rid themselves of any feeling of condescension towards others, a feeling incompatible with the experience of the eucharistic liturgy. Thus, the "wisdom" approach as delineated in point 4 is not only helpful but actually imperative for us in our commitment to the issues of justice and peace.

NOTES

[1] To avoid misunderstanding, I shall use the term *shalom* or *eirene* to refer to the biblical connotation of peace, and the English word "peace" to refer to the way this notion is perceived nowadays.

[2] This passage is interesting in that it presents the false prophets' action as subordinated to the all-encompassing authority of God as king, i.e. all-powerful master of his realm, whether creation or Israel.

[3] See also 98:7-9 and 99:1-5.

[4] I omit here in my discussion the case of the dieties who, inasmuch as their "kingship" is attached to a given city, collapse and disappear together with that city. If the Old Testament God did not experience such an end with the collapse of Jerusalem and its temple, it is because — as Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Second-Isaiah have taught us — his being was not linked to Jerusalem and the temple. In this he showed himself indeed to be a universal God, i.e. the God of the universe. On this point see also below.

[5] It is significant that the above mentioned are the only six occurrences (twice in 14:27) of *eirene* in the entire gospel.

[6] This aspect is clearly central in Matthew since vv.11-14 are not found in the Lukan parallel (Luke 14:16-24).

[7] I would like to venture here a recommendation: that our Church celebrate regularly, instead of St. John's Liturgy, St. Basil's because of its more detailed and comprehensive "anaphoric" prayer.

[8] I limited purposely my statement to the Old Testament in order to exclude the *sui generis* New Testament notion of "folly wiser than wisdom". This notion is clearly connected with the message of God's kingdom.

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"Just as bread and wine are lifted up in the eucharist for the sanctification of the world and all people, a sacramental approach to creation is needed for its reintegration."

"Through his death Christ has destroyed the power of sin and death, which are the primary causes of injustice, and through his resurrection Christ has made eternal peace between God and humanity, among human beings and between human beings and the created world. This is the 'new creation'."

These excerpts from statements that came out of two Orthodox consultations, one on "Orthodox Perspectives on Creation" and the other on "Orthodox Perspectives on Justice and Peace", give a flavour of the papers brought together in this book. They are a selection of the papers presented at the consultations. They celebrate a sacramental approach to creation. And they provide a theological rational for a conscious commitment on the part of Christians to justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

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